

**LET'S GET OUR REGION
BACK ON TRACK**

AND UNLEASH OUR POTENTIAL



“

I will do everything
in my power to
restore pride in the
West Midlands

”

MY APPROACH TO THE JOB OF WEST MIDLANDS MAYOR

Over the last four years, **we had started to see the West Midlands reclaim its rightful place as a thriving and economically successful region.** But the region has been particularly hard hit by the COVID pandemic, and there is much more to do to make sure that we don't throw away those years of progress. As we get ready to show off the West Midlands to the world with Coventry City of Culture this year and the Birmingham Commonwealth Games next year, we must rebuild a successful economy, where the benefits of growth are shared with everyone.

On 4 May 2017, I was honoured to be elected as the first Mayor of the West Midlands, representing around three million people across Birmingham, Coventry, Solihull and the Black Country. **The job of the Mayor is to tackle the local issues which affect people in the region:**

- **Sorting out the local transport system**
- **Building more homes** in the region
- **Providing young people with the skills they need** to get a good career
- **Bringing in new jobs and businesses**
- **Securing more investment** from Government and beyond
- **Championing the West Midlands** at every opportunity

It's a big job, with responsibility for overseeing billions of pounds of investment, and the ability to attract billions more. I have taken the skills that I learnt in business, during my thirty-year career at John Lewis, and applied them to the job of Mayor. **My approach has been to work hard every day to benefit the region** where I grew up and which is my home. I have always aimed to:

- **Take a business-like practical approach to improving people's lives**
- **Bring people together to get things done, regardless of politics**
- **Champion the whole West Midlands, not just Birmingham**
- **Put the West Midlands first, persuading the Government to change their view when necessary**

At this election we have a critical choice: do we accelerate the progress of the last four years, or do we go back to the old failing approach which let down our region for decades?

I have worked tirelessly over the last four years to get the West Midlands moving in a positive direction after decades of decline. I promise that if you re-elect me as your Mayor on 6 May, I will do everything in my power to restore pride in the West Midlands.



Andy Street

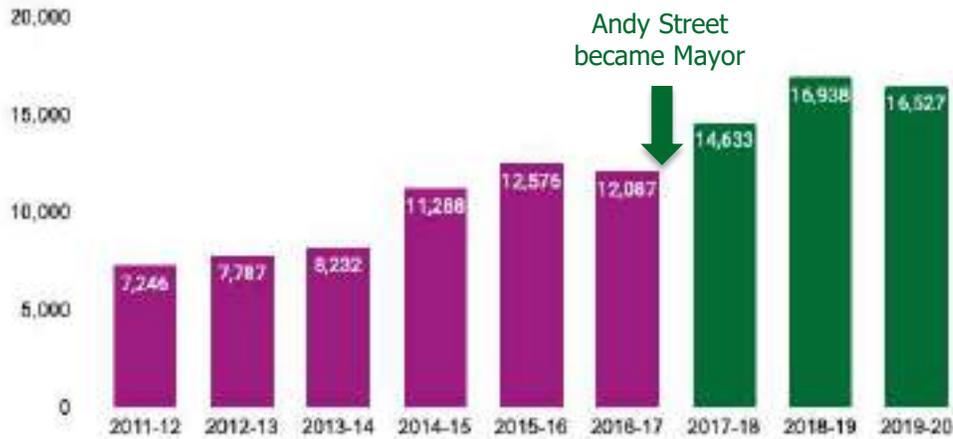
Conservative Candidate for West Midlands Mayor

SECURING THE TRANSPORT INVESTMENT WE NEED



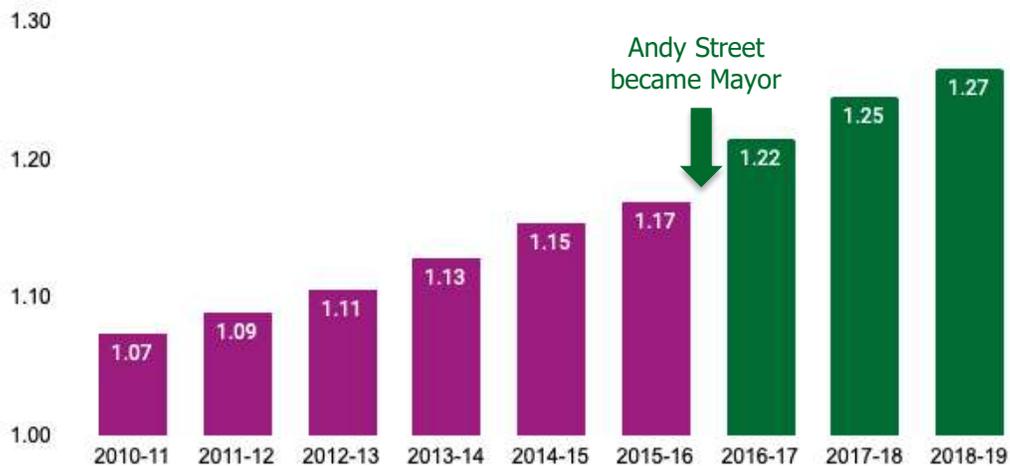
TfWM Capital Expenditure on local transport projects (£ million) (Source: TfWM / WMCA)

BUILDING HOUSES FASTER THAN WE HAVE DONE BEFORE



Net additional dwellings in the West Midlands (Source: MHCLG)

CREATING 97,000 NEW JOBS BEFORE THE PANDEMIC



Employment aged 16-64 in the West Midlands (millions) (Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey)

SUMMARY: GET OUR REGION BACK ON TRACK AND UNLEASH OUR POTENTIAL

WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS AS A REGION SINCE 2017

In the last four years we have made phenomenal progress as a region, with strong economic growth, and major improvements in transport, housing and skills, before the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic:

- **97,000 new jobs created in the region overall** in the three years before the pandemic, with **the most new jobs from inward investment of any region outside London** (35,000 new jobs created from 2017-2020).
- **Huge progress on my transport plan, with a level of transport investment this year seven times higher than the year before I became Mayor.** New Metro line built to Five Ways, and construction started on the line to Dudley and Brierley Hill, major station upgrades in Coventry and Wolverhampton, re-opening rail stations in Walsall and Birmingham, and new bus and cycle routes.
- **48,098 new homes built in the region in the three years 2017-2020**, nearly double the 25,000 target set in 2017. **Rough sleeping is down 65% since 2017, to the lowest level since 2010**, with over 377 homeless people helped through our Housing First scheme.
- **Over £3 billion of new funding brought in from Government**, with no Mayoral precept added to council tax bills.
- **Won backing for Coventry City of Culture, Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022, the West Midlands 5G testbed, and High Speed 2 to bring investment and jobs**, and restore pride in the West Midlands.

HOWEVER, THE WEST MIDLANDS HAS BEEN HIT HARD BY CORONAVIRUS -- SO WE MUST ACT QUICKLY TO GET BACK ON TRACK

- **Our region's economy has been hard hit by the pandemic**, particularly sectors like retail, hospitality and manufacturing, with thousands of workers laid off or furloughed.
- **We need to get the West Midlands economy back on track as our top priority, creating jobs and training opportunities**, and forging ahead with our **transport, housing and skills plans, and with the regeneration of local town centres.**
- **We must address the urgent challenge of climate change**, improving public transport, helping our businesses to adopt new green technologies and retrofitting our homes to make them more energy efficient. The environment is right at the heart of our plans for a green West Midlands recovery.
- **Then we must make sure that every community benefits from our region's success:** tackling homelessness and mental health challenges, addressing the region's health inequalities, and focussing on the whole West Midlands, not just Birmingham city centre.
- **Over the last four years, I have worked hard to be a Mayor you can trust to get things done.** This document sets out both my track record as Mayor and detailed plans for how we will succeed together in the years ahead.

MY PLAN FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

CREATE OVER 100,000 NEW GOOD QUALITY LOCAL JOBS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

- **Secure an electric battery Gigafactory for our region**, bringing 4,000 new jobs and protecting thousands more in the automotive industry and supply chain.
- **Achieve every possible contract for local businesses and secure jobs for local people** from major regional projects like HS2, the Commonwealth Games and Coventry City of Culture.
- **Become the national leader in construction, engineering, life sciences, technology, 5G** and other growing industries.
- **Move hundreds of well-paid civil service jobs out of London and into the West Midlands**, starting in Wolverhampton and Birmingham – creating local job opportunities and boosting the economy.

MAKE MASSIVE PROGRESS ON MY LONG-TERM TRANSPORT PLAN

- **Double transport spending in the region** by bringing in more investment from Government without raising council tax on local people.
- **Open the new metro stations** in Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton, and begin expansion into North Solihull.
- **Reopen five rail stations in Walsall and South Birmingham in the next three years**, and make progress on eighteen other new stations across the region.
- **Agree a major programme of new segregated cycle routes** and complete the roll-out of the West Midlands bike hire scheme.
- **Build on the success of the four-year bus fare freeze**, roll out more hydrogen and electric buses including making Coventry's fleet all-electric.

BUILD THOUSANDS OF NEW HOMES WHERE THEY ARE WANTED

- **Continue to drive a regional "brownfield first" approach to housing**, with over £400 million of new Government funding brought in to make it happen.
- **Champion our Green Belt and green spaces**, working with communities and residents fighting to protect them.
- **Demand more affordable homes are built**, seek an ambitious Affordable Housing Deal to bring new cash to the region, and pioneer our own "Help to Own" scheme to make home owning possible for more people.
- **Continue our progress on reducing the numbers of rough sleepers**, securing a long-term future for our Housing First scheme after the success housing 377 vulnerable people, and addressing the underlying causes of homelessness.

IMPROVE OUR ENVIRONMENT AND TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Make rapid progress on our "WM2041" environmental action plan** to make the West Midlands a net zero carbon region within the next 20 years, building on our work to improve public transport.
- **Launch mass programme of retrofitting people's homes with energy efficiency measures** to reduce fuel bills and carbon emissions.
- **Help industry move to green technology** including by winning Government funding for more initiatives like the Black Country zero carbon hub, and training young people for new green jobs like working with electric vehicles.
- **Invest in nature and our surroundings** by opening new urban parks like the Digbeth "Highline" viaduct park, replanting trees in areas such as Shakespeare's Forest of Arden, backing community

projects like Solihull's "Wildlife Ways", and creating a new National Trail for walkers around the Green Belt of the West Midlands.

- **Run a Great West Midlands Clean Up campaign against litter, fly-tipping and graffiti ahead of the Commonwealth Games** to make sure we are ready to welcome the world to our region.

BACK OUR HIGH STREETS, TOWN AND CITY CENTRES

- **Build on our track record of winning over £100 million of Government funding for town centres** including Brierley Hill, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, West Bromwich, Walsall and Wolverhampton.
- **Deliver our own major regional investment plan** including in city centres like Coventry, town centres like Dudley and village centres like Kingshurst.
- **Explore setting up new local co-working office spaces in our local centres** such as Walsall, Dudley, Halesowen and Stourbridge, so that office workers can work closer to home if they choose.
- **Regenerate iconic local sites** like Ravenscourt shopping centre in Brownhills, the swimming baths in Erdington, the Royalty Cinema in Harborne and Saddlers Quay in Walsall.
- **Champion the masterplans for areas such as Solihull and Sutton Coldfield**, working with partners to make them vibrant thriving local centres for the community.

MAKE SURE EVERY COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM THE REGION'S SUCCESS

- **Maximise the benefits of Coventry City of Culture in 2021, the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022 and High Speed 2**, with jobs for local people and investment in the region.
- **Support those who need extra help**, for example continue our work in "designing out" homelessness by addressing its causes, and support people with mental health issues through our Thrive programmes.
- **Set up a new Equalities Taskforce to ensure the West Midlands is a great place to live in, work and grow up for *all* our communities**, and work together with faith and community groups as trusted partners in our work on jobs, housing, transport and skills.
- **Make our communities safer and get crime down**, particularly on the transport network, while providing opportunities for young people so they don't get drawn into crime.

A CREDIBLE DELIVERY PLAN TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN

- **A proven track record over the last four years**, beating our targets and other city-regions on investment, skills and housing.
- **Commitment to secure £10 billion of new investment from Government and private investors** into the region.
- **Detailed plans on what exactly we plan to do**, and how we practically get the money and people together to achieve our goals.
- **A clear approach to the Mayor's role as a regional champion**, and proposals to strengthen the way the Combined Authority and other regional structures operate.

THE STARK CHOICE AT THIS ELECTION

On 6 May, voters in the West Midlands face a choice that will define the future direction of our region. Do we accelerate the progress of the last four years, or do we look backwards? My approach to the job is:

- **Taking a business-like practical approach to getting things done, with a credible plan for action**, rather than proposing theoretical ideas with no practical way of making them happen.
- **Bringing people together to get things done, regardless of who they work for, or what their politics are**, rather than reinforcing divisions and factional politics.
- **Supporting and investing in the whole West Midlands, particularly those places and communities that often get left out**, rather than always thinking of central Birmingham first.
- **Working with Government to win investment and make things happen**, rather than criticising Government and getting headlines, but being ignored.



“ “ I have always aimed to take a business-like practical approach to improving people’s lives. ” ”

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CREATING JOBS FOR ALL WITH A STRONG REGIONAL ECONOMY

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
“Get companies to bring highly-paid jobs to the West Midlands”	Most new jobs from inward investment of any region outside London with 35,000 new jobs created from 2017-2020, and 97,000 new jobs created in the region overall in the three years before the pandemic.	
“Make the West Midlands the Advanced Manufacturing ‘Workshop of the World’”	Secured funding for two new Institutes of Technology in Dudley and Solihull to train young people in manufacturing skills , saw the Manufacturing Technology Hub and Warwick Manufacturing Group receive over £270 million of funding for new technology research , and campaigned successfully for tariff-free trade with the EU in manufactured goods in the Brexit deal.	
“Grow technology businesses and the creative industries”	Won the competition to become the UK’s first 5G testbed region , brought in new tech jobs from companies like Advanced and The Economist, and helped broker the deal to open a new film studio complex with Peaky Blinders creator Steven Knight, and a new creative production hub in Digbeth.	
“Boost life sciences research and businesses”	Supported the £210 million investment deal in the Birmingham Life Sciences Park with private investors Bruntwood and Legal & General , and a further £11 million from Government for the Precision Health Technology Accelerator, which together are expected to create around 10,000 new jobs by 2030 .	
“Build a world-class construction industry”	Brought in billions of pounds of construction projects to the region including High Speed 2, the Commonwealth Games, new Metro and rail links, town centres and housing projects, and helped over 2,000 people into jobs through our Construction Gateway training scheme .	
“Champion small businesses and entrepreneurs”	Lobbied the Government for more support for small businesses during the Coronavirus pandemic , campaigned for the reform of the unfair business rates system , invested in coding bootcamps and accelerator programmes to support startup entrepreneurs.	
“Create flourishing high streets and town centres”	Backed the successful bids for over £100 million of Government funding for town centres including Brierley Hill, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton City Centre; and delivered our own major regional investments including in city centres like Coventry, town centres like Dudley and village centres like Kingshurst.	

KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Get the West Midlands back into work after COVID with Andy's Jobs Plan	Create at least 100,000 jobs and training opportunities in the next two years to help local people who are out of work after the Coronavirus pandemic, in our growing industries like construction and professional services, and through West Midlands 'big wins' like High Speed 2 and the Commonwealth Games.	
Help the West Midlands make the transition to green technology	Secure a major investor to build a battery Gigafactory at Coventry Airport and develop a local supply chain in manufactured components, metals and chemicals, launch a massive regional programme to improve the energy efficiency of homes with the installation of smart meters and thermostats, wall and loft insulation, double glazing and heat pumps, attract new low carbon modular housing factories to the region, and train thousands of young people for these new green jobs.	
Develop a globally competitive tech sector	Hire a Mayor's Tech Commissioner with responsibility for increasing the number of tech jobs and startups in the West Midlands, build on our expertise in rolling out 5G, scale up the West Midlands "Beat the Bots" fund to provide more training in fields like coding, UX/UI, cybersecurity and product management, explore setting up an Ambassador programme for West Midlands born entrepreneurs or investors who now live outside the region to help startups here.	
Reinvigorate our creative industries	Open the new Mercian Studios and the Creative Content Hub in Digbeth , work with the BBC to help their relocation to the West Midlands create as many new jobs for local people as possible, challenge the region's film industry to produce an Oscar- or BAFTA-winning film or TV series here within five years , and seek to make Birmingham the national home for eSports and gaming events.	
Bring life back to our town centres and city centres	Support local areas in delivering the over £100 million of Government-funded town centre projects in Brierley Hill, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, West Bromwich, Walsall and Wolverhampton, and deliver our own major regional investment plan including in city centres like Coventry, town centres like Dudley and village centres like Kingshurst. Champion the masterplans for areas such as Solihull and Sutton Coldfield and explore setting up new local co-working office spaces in high streets.	
Grow trade & Investment, bringing new jobs to the region	Deliver the Trade, Tourism and Investment programme for the Commonwealth Games, seek full devolution of trade and investment functions and funding to the West Midlands , including funds to incentivise inward investment in the region like Scotland or Wales, and undertake a rapid piece of work looking at the opportunities for reshoring of overseas jobs after the Coronavirus pandemic.	



“

We must act quickly
to get our young
people into good jobs
after lockdown ends

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ANDY'S JOBS PLAN: GETTING THE WEST MIDLANDS BACK TO WORK

WE HAD MADE GREAT PROGRESS AS A REGION SINCE 2017

In the last four years we had made phenomenal progress as a region, with strong economic growth and major improvements in transport, housing and skills:

- **Our Local Industrial Strategy was working, with 97,000 new jobs created in the three years before the pandemic**, and increasing numbers of jobs and new firms in our priority sectors like professional services, life sciences, creative and digital.
- **Massive investment in new housing, brownfield clean up, new Metro lines and rail stations meant that we were on course for thousands of new jobs in construction.**
- **Coventry City of Culture, Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022, and High Speed 2 giving us confidence** in our continued momentum as a region.

HOWEVER THE WEST MIDLANDS HAS BEEN HIT HARD BY CORONAVIRUS AND WE MUST ACT QUICKLY TO GET BACK ON TRACK

- Our region's economy has been hard hit by the pandemic, particularly sectors like retail, hospitality and manufacturing, with thousands of workers laid off or furloughed. **The West Midlands area is estimated to see 100,000 more people out of work**, eradicating the gains of the previous three years.
- We will overcome these challenges as we have done before in the West Midlands, with hard work, perseverance, and ingenuity. By working together, we have the chance to reshape our region's future for the benefit of all.

A RAPID RESPONSE IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS

As vaccines are rolled out, and lockdown is lifted in the next few months, we must act quickly to support those who are unemployed or are furloughed and at risk of losing their job, with **new opportunities totalling at least 100,000 new jobs and training opportunities in the next two years**:

1. **Protect what we have:** Get the support that businesses in sectors like retail and hospitality need, to recover those businesses and save those jobs. *Target = 8,000 jobs*
2. **Make the most of recent 'big wins':** Turn major projects like High Speed 2, Coventry City of Culture and the Birmingham Commonwealth Games into jobs for local people. *Target = 13,000 jobs*
3. **Double down on what was working well:** Use our housing, infrastructure, construction projects in the region to create new jobs for local people. *Target = 12,000 jobs*
4. **Play to our distinctive strengths:** Across the sectors where we plan to lead the world like automotive, the creative industry, digital and professional services. *Target = 10,000 jobs*
5. **Build back better:** Focus on green jobs like retrofitting. *Target = 18,000 jobs*
6. **Get people work ready:** Train people and give them experience in the workplace through the Kickstart scheme, Sector-Based Work Academies, Apprenticeships, digital bootcamps and other skills programmes. *Target = 39,000 opportunities*

SECURING THOSE JOBS FOR THE LONG-TERM IN GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE LOCAL BUSINESSES

In addition to the urgent work to recover the jobs in the West Midlands following the Coronavirus pandemic, **we also need to continue to shape the region's economy towards fast growing sectors which will provide highly paid jobs for future generations.** Below are the full details of progress which has been made since 2017, and the exciting and ambitious plans for the next Mayoral term.

For more information on Andy's Mayoral Jobs Plan, the full document is [available here](#).

SECURING OUR LEADERSHIP IN THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR

The West Midlands is the home of the UK’s automotive industry, with a long heritage of great cars being made in the region. We have a world-class skilled workforce, with 50,000 people employed in automotive alone and another 20,000 in related sectors. As our automotive companies race to transition to electric vehicles, **we need to stay ahead of our international competitors by investing in new technology, particularly in battery manufacturing.**

Given the challenges that the automotive industry faces, and the huge opportunities if we get the transition to clean fuels right, **companies and workers in the West Midlands need a Mayor who understands business and who is an effective champion.**

AUTOMOTIVE	
Over 400 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: Jaguar Land Rover, Aston Martin, Lotus, LEVC, Rimstock, ZF Lemforder
Worth £4.4 billion every year	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 8,300 people furloughed

Progress made:

- **Campaigned successfully for around £1 billion of Government financial support for the automotive industry in the West Midlands** including £500 million export guarantee for Jaguar Land Rover, £126 million for the National Battery Industrialisation Centre in Coventry, £271 million for the Manufacturing Technology Centre and Warwick Manufacturing Group, and over £40 million for autonomous vehicle testing and development.
- **Worked closely with our top carmaker, Jaguar Land Rover, to support them through the challenges of Brexit, drop in diesel sales, slowdown in sales in China** and with other skills and infrastructure needs. Endorsed their new strategy is to transition to electric vehicles for Jaguar by 2025, and introduce electric and hybrid options for Land Rover models in the coming years while keeping all of their plants in the West Midlands open.
- **Worked with the regional team to secure funding from Government for the £126 million National Battery Industrialisation Centre**, which has already been built and operating in Coventry to develop new battery technology, including £18M directly from the Combined Authority.
- **Leading the ongoing campaign to bring a large battery cell manufacturing factory (a Gigafactory) to the West Midlands**, meeting carmakers and battery manufacturers in the UK and in China, gained agreement to the most suitable site at Coventry Airport, and brokering support from the British Government to secure a new factory.
- **Set up a new £3 million skills fund specifically to help people train and gain new skills in the automotive sector**, with further funding available for automotive small businesses from the adult education budget.
- **Secured funding from Government for two new regional Institutes of Technology** at Dudley College and Solihull College, and setting up a new electric vehicle training centre in Wolverhampton to train mechanics for the new technology.
- **Won £20 million funding for our Future Mobility Zone programme to test new transport technologies, in addition to the more than £50 million of funding already secured for autonomous vehicle testing projects** on track at Horiba Mira in Nuneaton, in the city centre in Coventry, on the Warwick University campus and on roads around Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry.
- **Won the competition for the West Midlands to become the UK’s first regional 5G testbed**, which will accelerate the development of driverless car technology.

- **Supported successful efforts to bring new automotive jobs and investment to the West Midlands**, for example 200 new jobs at the new Lotus design and technical centre in Coventry, BritishVolt setting up their headquarters in Nuneaton, LEVC starting to manufacture electric vans in Coventry, and a new Norton Motorcycle Factory in Solihull following investment by TVS Motor Company.
- **Campaigned successfully for the needs of the West Midlands automotive sector and its supply chain** to be prioritised in the new trade deal with the European Union, particularly tariff-free trade in goods and Rules of Origin.

Plan for 2021-2024:

1. Protect existing jobs in the West Midlands automotive industry

- **Work closely with Jaguar Land Rover and other automotive companies to secure the jobs of workers** at all existing plants and sites in the West Midlands.
- **Work with the Government to reduce tariffs and other barriers (such as recognition of professional qualifications and data sharing) to the automotive industry in trade talks** with the US, the EU and other major markets.

2. Accelerate the move to electric vehicles and clean technologies

- **Roll out thousands of electric vehicle charging points on residential streets, at workplaces and at car parks** so that people can be confident that if they upgrade to an electric vehicle, they will have somewhere to charge their car.
- Work with National Grid, Western Power Distribution and service station operators such as Welcome Break to **install fast superchargers on the motorway network** in the West Midlands.
- **Create thousands of new jobs in electric charging point engineering, planning and installation** across the West Midlands.
- **Push Government for support for people to switch to electric cars** through financial incentives to purchase electric vehicles, or scrappage payments if people scrap their older, more polluting vehicles.
- **Work with universities in the region to research rare earth metals supply chains to ensure the long-term security of supplies** for the West Midlands electric automotive industry, and the ethical sourcing of these materials.

3. Attract new automotive jobs to the West Midlands

- **Secure a major investor (or investors) to build a Gigafactory at Coventry Airport**, creating thousands of new jobs.
- Work with international automotive companies to **scale up electric van and electric bus manufacturing to the West Midlands**, for example with London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC), Arrival backed by Hyundai and Kia, and CAD CAM Automotive.
- **Work with the Geely Group to bring more jobs from Lotus, LEVC and Volvo to Coventry** and the wider West Midlands.
- **Step up our efforts to bring new automotive inward investment into the West Midlands** with a clear target list of the companies we would like to move to the region.

4. Help to develop world-class new automotive technologies

- **Explore whether we can develop a new automotive tech accelerator programme**, particularly focused on developing new software, vehicle data and in-car experience features in conjunction with the Warwick Manufacturing Group and the National Automotive Innovation Centre in Coventry.
- **Make the West Midlands the leading UK centre for on-road trials of self-driving vehicles West Midlands**, with the goal of reaching Level 4-5 autonomy as soon as possible, and bring new jobs from companies working on this to the region.
- **Roll out 5G connectivity and sensors on road junctions across the West Midlands** to allow autonomous vehicles to move around safely.
- **Explore whether the West Midlands could be home to any new national Government road safety and cybersecurity institutions or regulators** that will need to be created to oversee autonomous vehicles.
- **Lobby Government to secure a much greater share of public investment in research and development, to match the high levels of private investment in the region.**

5. Develop automotive skills and make sure workers get a good deal

- **Extend National Retraining Scheme to the automotive sector**, helping workers to learn the latest skills and move into new more highly-paid jobs in the automotive industry.
- **Work with the Institute for Apprenticeships to create new courses in new automotive skills** such as electric powertrain, battery technology, autonomous sensors and software, and composite materials.
- **Continue our innovative apprenticeship levy transfer fund to increase the number of apprenticeships available** in the West Midlands for young people.
- **Consider funding further electric vehicle training centres**, like the existing centre in Wolverhampton, in other parts of the West Midlands.
- **Launch a new scheme to get women and BME young people into technical jobs** in the manufacturing industry.

6. Provide local infrastructure support for the West Midlands automotive businesses

- **Persuade Government and National Grid to invest in additional energy capacity** (from renewable sources) for the Coventry and Warwickshire area in particular.
- **Work with Government for changes to the energy system in the UK so that automotive companies are not liable for full payment of additional energy connections if they wish to create new jobs in the West Midlands**, in order to make UK manufacturing competitive with Germany and other countries.
- **Campaign for a full reform of the business rates system** which unfairly penalises those with large floorspace like automotive companies.



“ Companies and workers in the West Midlands need a Mayor who understands business and who is an effective champion ”



WINNER
WORLD CAR AWARDS
2019 WORLD CAR DESIGN OF THE YEAR
2019 WORLD CAR DESIGN OF THE YEAR
2019 WORLD CAR DESIGN OF THE YEAR

JAGUAR

REINFORCING OUR STRENGTH IN ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing is about far more than automotive in the West Midlands: whether it's aerospace, rail technology, logistics equipment, metals, or materials, we are a leader in creating products which sell around the world. Yet these businesses have been hugely challenged by the pandemic, having to transform their production lines and their supply chains rapidly. We know too that there have been long-term issues which have meant that we have lagged behind competitors like Germany, such as low productivity, low technology adoption and problems finding and retaining key skills.

Given the huge potential of our manufacturing sector to create jobs and export growth, we must do everything possible to support firms in the region. Manufacturing sits at the heart of our local industrial strategy, and we have made some excellent progress over the last four years, particularly on improving our technical skills system. It's now time for us to lead the world again.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING	
10,000 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: UTC Aerospace, Meggitt, MOOG, ASSA Abloy, Castings Plc.
Worth £16 billion every year, growing 6% from 2016-2018	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 38,000 people furloughed

Progress made:

- **Welcomed international engineering firm Meggitt to a new manufacturing facility at Ansty Park in Coventry, advanced manufacturing firms Hydraforce and Guhring to the Advanced Manufacturing Hub in Birmingham, and further investment from Assa Abloy, the world's largest lock manufacturer, in the Black Country.**
- **Supported 1,840 apprentices in 613 businesses through our Levy Transfer Fund,** which has had over £21 million pledged by large businesses across the region.
- **Supported the successful regional bids for over £25 million for two new Institutes of Technology in Dudley and Solihull,** and secured a further £12 million of funding to upgrade buildings and facilities at our further education colleges.
- **Trialled 5G technology at AE Aerospace in Saltley,** to make more efficient usage of machinery, to track tools and to check quality using ultra-high definition cameras.
- **Used Combined Authority funds to clean up and prepare sites** which could be used for manufacturing firms, for example at Phoenix 10 in Walsall, Cakemore Road in Rowley Regis, and Advanced Manufacturing Hub in Aston.
- **Worked with the Midlands Aerospace Alliance to develop a sector action plan for the aerospace sector,** and **launched a study into the potential of the space technology sector** in the West Midlands.
- **Set up the Midlands Manufacturing Resilience Commission,** led by Clive Hickman (CEO of the Manufacturing Technology Centre in Coventry), to review the skills, opportunities and challenges for the sector in the region, and which has developed recommendations on how to strengthen manufacturing, and create more jobs and businesses in the region.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Support the rollout of the Government's Made Smarter Adoption programme to the West Midlands** following the successful pilot in the North West, to help SME manufacturers adopt digital technology, and **seek further funding for innovation in West Midlands firms from the £147 million Manufacturing Made Smarter Challenge.**
- **Develop a strong pipeline of manufacturing sites in the West Midlands,** unlocking projects on a pragmatic site-by-site basis, such as Moxley Park in Walsall, Longbridge and at Coventry Airport for battery manufacturing.

- **Fill the gaps in the current financing options available to manufacturing firms**, for example through the proposed West Midlands Co-invest Fund, which would take equity in firms to provide recovery growth capital, **reinforce the local business financing sector in the West Midlands, building on the relocation of HSBC UK**, and work with lenders on proactive origination to help firms understand what financing options are available to them.
- **Seek the expansion of the National Retraining Scheme to the manufacturing sector, rolling it out in the West Midlands first, continue our work to increase the number of higher level technical apprenticeships**, in particular through our Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Fund, and **support the rollout of T-Levels in the region.**
- **Create new skills development offers, particularly focused on developing effective business strategy and management skills in SMEs**, and find ways for SME business leaders to spend more time thinking about the future direction of their businesses and how they adapt to new technologies, working with university business schools in the region.
- **Persuade Government and National Grid to invest in additional energy capacity** to support manufacturing firms, and **develop and identify funding for schemes like Repowering the Black Country** to help businesses decarbonise their operations.
- **Explore a 'skills matching' service in the Midlands to quickly move talented workers between firms** during restructuring, and seek funding for **Project GREAT, which moves skilled workers into publicly funded research and development in the manufacturing sector** during business cycle downturns to develop new technologies and prevent the sector losing their skills.
- **Review the structures and sources of public sector business support for SMEs in the region to simplify the system**, to ensure that it is working in a coordinated way, and to make it easier for busy SME business people to understand what help is available.
- **Make the most of the Government's additional measures to encourage capital investment in manufacturing businesses** such as the super deduction on plant and machinery investments, capital allowances, Research and Development tax relief to grow investment in West Midlands businesses.
- **Work with our region's universities to strengthen their links with industry, helping them to develop programmes such as the Speed to Scale Region**, which will provide re-skilling, scale-up support, and research and product development for firms in the West Midlands and beyond.
- **Champion the interests of the West Midlands manufacturing sector as new trade deals are considered by the UK Government**, to secure new market access, whilst ensuring that manufacturers are not undercut further by low-cost markets.

FOCUS ON THE TECHNICAL SKILLS EMPLOYERS NEED

For more information on what Andy has done to improve technical skills and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 3 on page 76.



“ With record levels of planned investment, we must make the most of these opportunities for local firms and local people ”

SUPPORTING OUR GROWTH IN CONSTRUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The West Midlands has seen a boom in new construction in the last few years, in site preparation, housebuilding, commercial developments, and particularly in transport infrastructure due to High Speed 2 and the improvements to our local transport network. With record levels of planned investment over the next few years, we must make the most of these opportunities for local firms and people in the West Midlands.

We have made great progress on skills development in the sector, with thousands of young people going through construction training schemes in the region. **The construction sector was the fastest growing sector in the West Midlands before the Coronavirus pandemic.** And we have also been working on bringing in new technology that can make construction smarter, like advanced modular methods and new brownfield remediation techniques. **There's much further to go, and as our region's Mayor I will lead the charge.**

CONSTRUCTION & BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES	
19,400 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: Balfour Beatty, Fortel, Morgan Sindall, Willmott Dixon, Galliford Try
Worth £7.0 billion every year, growing 1% from 2016-2018	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 17,300 people furloughed

Progress made:

- **Secured billions of pounds of investment in construction of infrastructure in the region** from Government and the private sector, for example the confirmation of High Speed 2, Birmingham Commonwealth Games, Metro expansions, new and transformed rail stations, and our brownfield remediation and housing programme.
- **Set up Construction training hubs on major sites in the region, so that young people can learn practical skills on site**, for example at Perry Barr and Moda Broad Street in Birmingham, in Coventry city centre, at Dudley College, at Wolverhampton College and at a new plant training centre at Wolverhampton College.
- **Ran the Construction Gateway training scheme to train over 2,000 local unemployed people in construction skills** using funding from the Government's National Retraining Scheme.
- **Funded new training courses where local unemployed people learn the latest construction skills using virtual reality simulators** with Solihull College and the RMF Construction Training Academy.
- **Ran a series of events and webinars, and provided information online to help people find out more about careers in construction.**
- **Secured the relocation of Government departments and agencies with a focus on infrastructure and construction to the West Midlands**, including Ministers and senior decision-makers, for example Homes England setting up in Coventry, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government moving over 500 jobs to Wolverhampton, and the Department for Transport to Birmingham.
- **Secured £15 million funding for the new National Brownfield Institute at the University of Wolverhampton**, with planning permission secured in late 2020 and the contractor appointed in March 2021.
- **Persuaded Ministers to set up their new national £10 million Advanced Methods of Construction (AMC) Taskforce in Wolverhampton.**
- **Set up our own Zero Carbon homes taskforce** with the UK Green Building Council to help us meet our environmental net zero target of 2041 in the region by improving standards in new homes built.

- **Secured more funding from Government to get the construction of the Midlands Met Hospital started again** after the collapse of Carillion.
- **Ran a programme of activities to help local firms get contracts on the High Speed 2 programme**, such as McAuliffe's of Bilston, Armac Demolition of Solihull, Fitzgerald Contractors of Birmingham and Forkers of West Bromwich.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- Continue to **lobby for even more government infrastructure investment in the West Midlands**, particularly funding to continue our transport improvements and brownfield remediation of housing and employment sites, from the Government's Levelling Up Fund, the Intra-City Transport Settlement, and the Community Recovery Fund.
- Support more **local construction companies, particularly SMEs, to win contracts on big infrastructure projects, by continuing to work to bring local suppliers together with the procurement teams of major projects like High Speed 2.**
- Work with the Construction Industry Training Board to **explore the development of more construction training hubs across the region**, to increase the level of hands-on construction training available to local people.
- **Become the UK centre of expertise in Advanced Methods of Construction (AMC), making the most of the new £10 million Government task force based in Wolverhampton, and working to attract new factories to build modular homes** here in the West Midlands.
- Support Wolverhampton University getting the **National Centre of Excellence in Construction** up and running, making the Black Country the home of Europe's largest specialist construction hub, including the **National Brownfield Institute.**
- Expand the **West Midlands Combined Authority's successful Construction Gateway programme.**
- Continue to **support schemes to introduce young people into the construction industry**, such as Construction Careers Live!
- **Campaign for more construction and infrastructure decision-makers in Government to relocate to the West Midlands.**

OUR WEST MIDLANDS TRANSPORT AND HOUSING PROGRAMMES

For more information on what Andy has done to build new homes and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 4 on page 90, and for what he has done to improve our transport infrastructure, please see Chapter 2 on page 50.

BACKING PIONEERING NEW DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

We know that digital technology has changed the world around us dramatically, and it has helped many of us to keep on working, and connecting with friends and family during lockdown. **It's not just technology companies that need to be digitally adept: all firms need to be digital to succeed in the twenty-first century.**

We have already made some great progress in fostering our own digital sector in the West Midlands, in particular by focussing our skills funding on new digital courses, like cybersecurity and free coding bootcamps for young people. We are building on our existing strengths in professional services, finance, life sciences and automotive, and developing new strengths like 5G. If you look at companies like Gymshark in Solihull, you will see that **we have the brilliant talent here in the West Midlands to take our digital growth even further.**

The Mayor's role is not to direct the startup or scale-up sectors, but rather, it is to **create the favourable conditions in which businesses can grow rapidly in the West Midlands, and not feel that they have to move to London in order to succeed.** There's much more to do, and after the Coronavirus pandemic it will be even more important than ever that we make the West Midlands the best place to start a company.

DIGITAL	
8,200 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: Advanced, SCC, Virgin Media, BT, Codemasters / EA, B13 Technology
Worth £4.7 billion every year, growing 15% from 2016-2018 (with Digital)	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 7,000 people furloughed

LEADING THE COUNTRY IN 5G TECHNOLOGY

With more video than ever in apps and on the internet, **5G technology is a must for those who use their phones on the move.** 5G technology transfers data ten times as fast as 4G, meaning we can reliably stream Netflix or Amazon Prime on the bus. It will increase battery life, and it means that our phones still work well at crowded sports events, concerts or even at New Street Station!

But 5G can do more than just improve your experience on our phones. **This new technology, with its speed and reliability, will change the way that factories work, the way that autonomous vehicles drive on our roads, the way that doctors consult with their patients and much more.** 5G has the potential to create thousands of new jobs across a range of different industries. That's why, when the Government announced a competition to see which city-region should lead the way in rolling out 5G, **we knew that the West Midlands had to win.**

Following the Government decision to remove Huawei as a supplier from the UK's telecommunications networks by 2027, there is an even bigger opportunity for the West Midlands. **We have the potential to build on our region's existing strengths to provide the research, manufacturing, digital and commercial expertise needed to become more self-sufficient in the telco industry,** and in the process create thousands of new jobs for local people.



“ “ We need to adopt new technologies like 5G to secure highly paid jobs in the future ” ”

LEADING THE COUNTRY IN 5G TECHNOLOGY

Progress made:

- **Won the competition to be the Government's first 5G city-region**, secured £25 million of Government funding WM5G pilot.
- **5G covering over 10% of Birmingham and over 7% of the region so far, the highest coverage in the country** - better than Greater Manchester by a factor of three.
- **Set up three new 5G accelerators (5SPRING) to help startups and SMEs try out 5G technology** and see how it could help them, in Coventry, Wolverhampton and Birmingham.
- **Ran a series of 5G trials in healthcare and in transport**, including the UK's first 5G connected tram, parking, and connecting traffic lights and sensors using 5G to reduce congestion.
- **Trialled 5G in areas with a high density of people to improve download speed and reliability like Birmingham New Street station and the Ricoh Arena in Coventry**, and welcomed the opening of the Vodafone Business Lounge at the Ricoh Arena for local businesses to experience 5G technology.
- **Ran a set of trials of the uses of 5G technologies in transport** Trialled 5G technology at AE Aerospace in Saltley, to make more efficient usage of machinery, to track tools and to check quality using ultra-high definition cameras.
- **Worked with mobile operators and councils to help them secure agreement for new 5G sites, accelerating the rollout** of network technology.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Build on the success of 5G pilot**, by rolling out the new technology and securing more funding from Government to run further trials and grow these into new jobs and businesses in the West Midlands.
- **Aim for at least 50% 5G coverage** across the West Midlands urban area by 2025.
- **Campaign to attract the new National Telecoms Lab secure research facility being set up by Government to the West Midlands**, and push for a ringfenced R&D fund from UKRI.
- Build the leading UK telecoms cluster in the West Midlands, including **creating a new Technical College for Telecoms to train young people in network engineering skills**.
- **Investigate potential partnerships with telecoms manufacturers like Nokia to locate equipment manufacturing facilities in the West Midlands**, after the decision to phase Huawei out of the UK telecoms infrastructure by 2027.

GROWING OUR WEST MIDLANDS TECH SECTOR

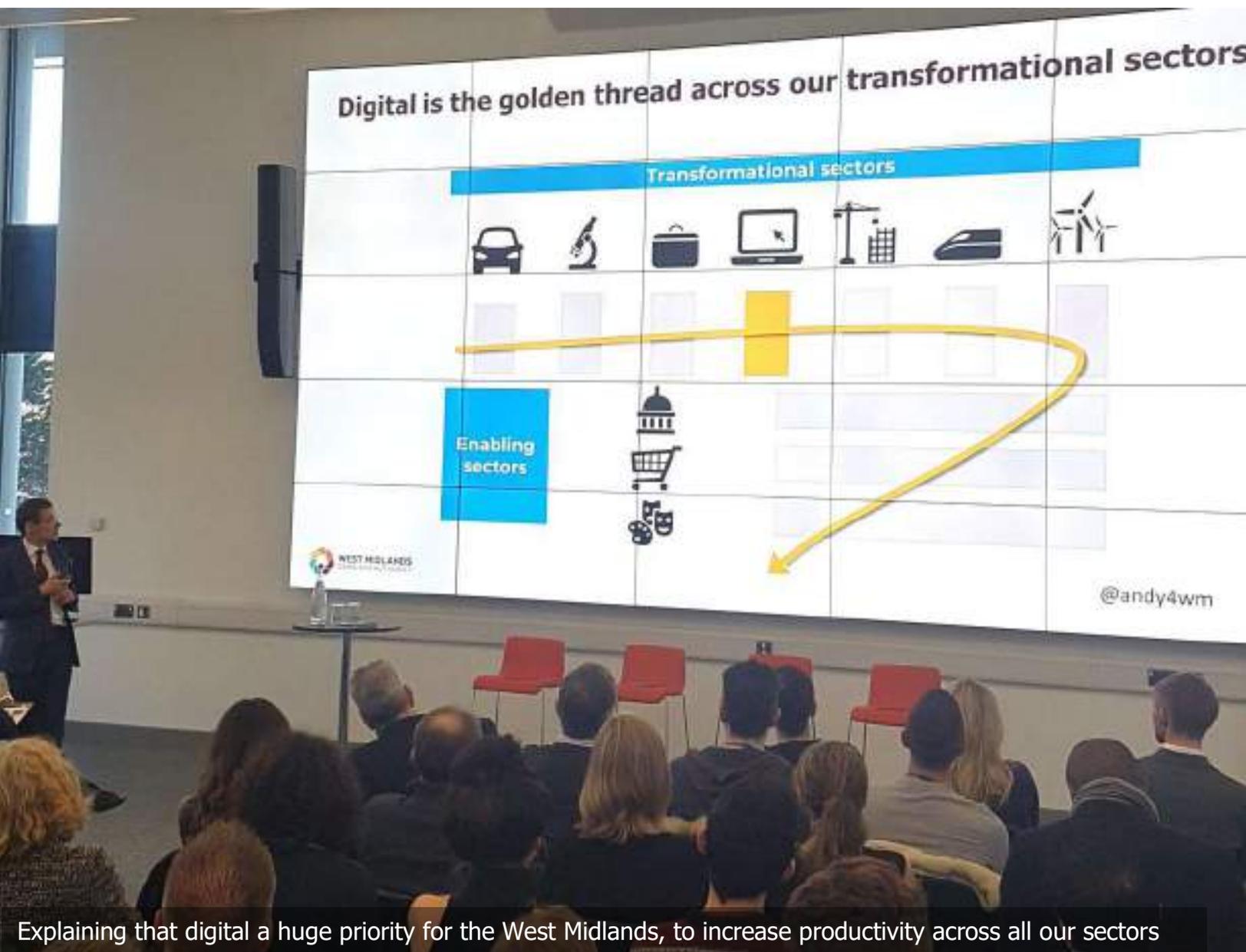
Progress made:

- **Birmingham remains the top startup city outside London for the seventh year running, with a 27% increase in the year before the pandemic, and is also the top location for scale-ups:** the West Midlands was identified as one of the top established FinTech clusters in the UK by the 2021 Government Kalifa FinTech review.
- **Ran the UrbanStart GovTech challenge to encourage startups to set up businesses to solve public sector challenges in the West Midlands,** and sponsored the WMCA/Birmingham Tech startup programme.
- **Set up the West Midlands Digital Skills Partnership to bring together digital businesses and skills providers in the region to improve the quality of the training,** and ensure young people are ready for work straight away after they complete their courses.
- **Ran 20 digital bootcamps for 750 people** using the £6.5 million “Beat the Bots” digital retaining fund secured from Government, with a particular focus on helping women and BME young people into digital careers, and training 100 young people in full fibre installation in a new project in Wolverhampton.
- Set up new digital training centres such as the **Digital innovation Hub at Walsall College,** and **an ethical hacking and cybersecurity training centre** at TechTalent Academy, Birmingham.
- **Welcomed the growth of co-working spaces for entrepreneurs in the region** such as the Engine Room FinTech Hub at Wesleyan, Innovation Birmingham, the Growth Hub in Coventry and WeWork in Birmingham.
- **Welcomed more technology jobs to the region,** for example BT moving 3,000-4,000 jobs into Snowhill 3, and The Economist setting up an innovation unit.
- **Supported programmes in the region to encourage entrepreneurs** such as NatWest’s Entrepreneurial Spark, Goldman Sachs 10,000 SMEs, Amazon Small Business Accelerator, and **the expansion of angel network Minerva Business Angels to Birmingham.**
- **Made live bus and Metro data from Transport for West Midlands and operators available to developers** so that they can develop their own Open Data tools and applications.
- **Partnered with local authorities to accelerate the rollout of mobile and fibre infrastructure,** using telecoms experts from WM5G to support over 40 initiatives to tackle “not spots”, slow internet speeds and bad reception.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Hire a Mayor’s Tech Commissioner with responsibility for increasing the number of tech jobs and startups in the West Midlands,** galvanising existing tech businesses and organisations and providing leadership in this vital sector.
- **Explore the idea of a Station F-style tech facility in Grand Central in the old John Lewis store, and support new workspaces specifically for startups and entrepreneurs in the West Midlands,** particularly the emerging cluster around Digbeth, and seek to partner with other industries in the region to create technology accelerator or incubator programmes, for example with the automotive or the construction industries.
- **Scale up the West Midlands “Beat the Bots” training fund to provide more digital skills programmes** in fields like coding, UX/UI, cybersecurity and product management, working with the West Midlands Digital Skills Partnership to make sure this training leads straight to jobs in the region.
- **Explore setting up an Ambassador programme for West Midlands born entrepreneurs or investors who now live outside the region,** for example in London, New York or San Francisco, such as Cal Henderson (CTO of Slack), and Rahul Vohra (CEO of Superhuman).
- **Partner with MI5, MI6 and GCHQ to launch a new recruitment scheme for talented young people from the West Midlands to move into cybersecurity and intelligence jobs** to keep Britain safe.

- **Build on the model of Midven's Greater Birmingham EIS fund to explore new Venture Capital Trusts or EIS Funds specifically for West Midlands startup and scale-up firms,** so that people can invest in high-potential firms in the region, and **fill the gaps in the current financing options available to technology firms,** in particular improving the availability of pre-seed and seed capital for West Midlands firms so they don't have to relocate to London to grow.
- **Seek the relocation of decision-makers in key Government innovation agencies such as Innovate UK and the new Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA) to the West Midlands.**
- **Accelerate the £3 million West Midlands Innovation Programme to build a pipeline of innovation projects** to develop new technologies in our priority sectors that will be able to attract Government and private investment.
- **Run a new 'Digital Catch Up' programme to help those who currently can't use the internet learn digital skills,** through the West Midlands Coalition for Digital Inclusion.



Explaining that digital a huge priority for the West Midlands, to increase productivity across all our sectors

BOOSTING OUR INNOVATIVE HEALTH & LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR

We have seen the superb work of our NHS teams in the region through the pandemic, but less well known is the role that other West Midlands health and life science professionals have played in the last year. Researchers at the University of Birmingham have been sequencing genomes from Covid-19, the School of Microbiology has been providing policy advice to Government, and has developed a new antibody test with local biotech company, The Binding Site; Warwick University scientists have used computer models of human lung cells to predict how COVID-19 drugs will work, and material scientists from the University of Wolverhampton produced new antiviral materials using 3D printing.

We have world-class research and technology here in the West Midlands, and we are getting increasingly good at commercialising these ideas and exporting them around the world. There is a huge potential opportunity not only to improve people’s health in the region and beyond, but also to create valuable businesses that will employ thousands more people in the future.

Our universities, our companies and our NHS working together make us one of the most innovative places in the world for health and life sciences. Given the stark health inequalities which came to the fore during the Coronavirus pandemic, and have been analysed in our “Health of the Region” report, **we need to make sure that local people are some of the first beneficiaries of the new medical advances made by our life sciences sector in the region.**

HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES	
6,500 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: The Binding Site, Salts Healthcare, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire, Cancer Research UK
Worth £7.9 billion every year, growing 3% from 2016-2018	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 14,600 people furloughed

Progress made:

- **Secured a £210 million investment in the Birmingham Health Innovation Campus from private investors Bruntwood and Legal & General**, and a further £11 million from Government for the Precision Health Technology Accelerator, which together are expected to create **around 10,000 new jobs by 2030.**
- **Ran a series of 5G trials in healthcare settings**, including to help doctors perform remote ultrasound scans, in hospitals, in ambulances, and in care homes, to help doctors reach patients during the pandemic.
- **Championed bids for more funding for the region’s NHS**, including £97 million for the new ACAD centre at Heartlands, £36 million for the A&E at Walsall Manor Hospital, and getting the construction of the new Midlands Met Hospital in Sandwell going again after the collapse of Carillion.
- **In addition to existing funding through the Adult Education Budget, created a new scheme to train 100 health and social workers** in higher-level qualifications, **and over 100 new social care apprenticeships** through the Levy Transfer Fund.
- **Welcomed a new medical devices testing and evaluation centre (MD-TEC) to Birmingham** as part of the Institute for Translational Medicine, and the **new Centre for Applied Intelligence to Warwick University.**
- **Contributed £56 million funding for the upgrade of University station**, to improve the connectivity between the life sciences cluster and the rest of the region.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Support the opening of the Birmingham Health Innovation Campus in Selly Oak and Edgbaston**, and work with the West Midlands Growth Company to lead a campaign to bring biotech companies to occupy the new facilities, with a particular focus on reshoring of production following the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Champion the plans to **create a new hospital with a life sciences and health innovation campus around the UK Central Hub and High Speed 2 Interchange station in Solihull**.
- **Explore opportunities to reshore manufacturing of medicines or medical equipment such as PPE** in the aftermath of the Coronavirus pandemic, and **seek opportunities for the relocation of Government health agencies**, for example teams within the new National Institute for Health Protection.
- **Secure capital investment for West Midlands life sciences businesses**, for example from the £1 billion UAE-UK Sovereign Investment Partnership in Life Sciences.
- **Deliver the recommendations of the “Health of the Region” report** to tackle the underlying health inequalities in the West Midlands.
- **Support our NHS Trusts with their plans to create new types of digital healthcare**, such as The Royal Wolverhampton’s partnership with Babylon ‘digital first’ model, University Hospitals Birmingham’s work with BT on 5G and remote diagnostics, and University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire’s work on digital pathology and electronic maternity health records.

Artist’s impression of the Birmingham Health Innovation Campus in Selly Oak



“ Health and life sciences can be a sector where we lead the world. ”

- **Make the most of the fantastic new Midlands Metropolitan Hospital in Smethwick which is set to open in 2022**, and work to provide easy transport links and local housing for key workers on sites such as Abberley Street and Cranford Way.
- **Support the pioneering work of the Warwick Data Science Group and the Centre for Applied Intelligence** on medical imaging for example, and champion collaboration at the Warwick Manufacturing Group with experts in industry in other disciplines such as materials and automotive engineering. This type of collaboration can lead to brilliant new products, such as the 'morphable' seat at Jaguar Land Rover and other in-car wellness technology, which helps to mitigate health risks on long journeys.
- Build on the work of the West Midlands Academic Health Science Network to bring together NHS clinicians, academic researchers, industry partners, digital entrepreneurs and investors to **take new healthcare technologies from trials through to mass use across the region**.
- **Secure funding from Government for a West Midlands Radical Health Prevention Fund to provide an investment fund for these plans**, focusing on stopping people developing ill-health in the first place.
- **Establish digital health care centres at New Street station and in other easily accessible locations like rail stations and town centres**, so that people can easily and quickly access important diagnostic tools such as ultrasound scans and mammograms.
- **Work with universities, colleges and NHS Trusts in the region to develop a joint health skills roadmap** to ensure that we are training our young people for the jobs needed in the future in the health and life sciences sector, making the most of the Government's additional funding for new nurses and other NHS staff.

IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR WEST MIDLANDS RESIDENTS

For more information on what Andy has done to improve health and wellbeing and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 7 on page 134.

KEEPING OUR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SECTOR GROWING FAST

In the decade before the Coronavirus pandemic, we saw a huge growth in the number of professional services jobs in the region, in our city centres and business parks. We have the strongest cluster outside London, and **our firms serve clients worldwide, not just in the UK**. This is the largest sector in the region, which is going from strength to strength, particularly after big wins like the move of HSBC UK's headquarters and the confirmation of High Speed 2.

Backing professional services as Mayor means not only championing the region, but also leading the bids for new relocations, getting the public transport network sorted, and making sure that there is sufficient housing and office space in the right places. **We also have to make sure that our professional services sector is something that children from all communities across the West Midlands can aspire to, so it's vital we improve our skills and training provision, and the careers advice young people get at school.** Working together we can secure a prosperous future for the professional services sector in the West Midlands.

BUSINESS, FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	
53,200 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: PwC, Deloitte, Gowling WLG, WSP, Grant Thornton
Worth £29.1 billion every year, growing 3% from 2016-2018	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 90,100 people furloughed

Progress made:

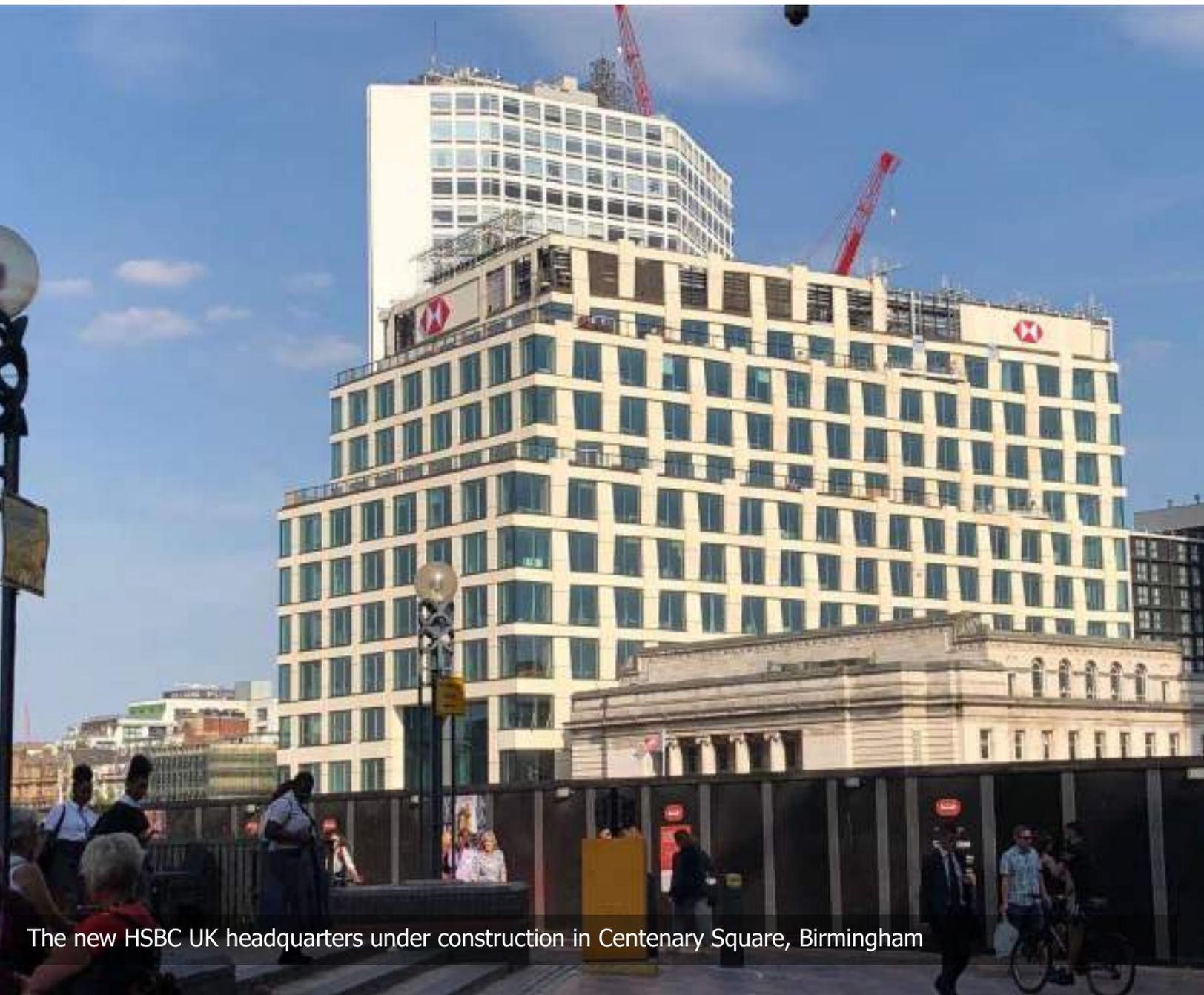
- **Directly supported the construction of flagship office developments in the region**, such as the offices at Coventry Friargate, 2 Park Square in Longbridge, and the infrastructure to allow the development of new office space around the UK Central HS2 station in Solihull.
- **Secured the relocation of Government departments and agencies that have a focus on infrastructure and construction to the West Midlands**, including Ministers and senior decision-makers - for example Homes England setting up in Coventry, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government moving over 500 jobs to Wolverhampton, and the Department for Transport setting up a second headquarters in Birmingham.
- **Welcomed thousands more jobs into the region from private sector companies who have decided to invest here**, for example BT moving 3,000-4,000 jobs into Snowhill 3, WSP moving 700 jobs, The Economist setting up an innovation unit, Genesee and Wyoming, a US transportation company, moving their shared services centre, and of course supported HSBC UK in moving their HQ to Birmingham.
- **Made substantial progress on improving the West Midlands public transport system and building more housing**, particularly in our town and city centres where many young people want to live.
- **The West Midlands is the top destination for people leaving London to move home**, but despite good progress challenges remain in retaining graduates immediately after graduation.
- **Supported Birmingham Professional Services Week** to get young people interested in careers in business services.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Support councils in unlocking sites for new prime office developments**, for example at Snow Hill and Millennium Point in Birmingham, Friargate in Coventry, DY5 in Brierley Hill, Wolverhampton i10, Westgate Solihull.
- After the success of HSBC's head-office move to the West Midlands **target other financial services and FinTech firms, insurance companies, law firms, accounting firms and**

consulting companies to move their headquarters here to secure the region's place as a services hub.

- **Improve the West Midlands public transport system** to ensure those who work in the city centres, business parks, campuses and other important employment areas can commute quickly and easily, and introduce flexitime season passes for those who will now work part-time from home.
- **Explore setting up new local co-working office spaces in our local centres** such as Sutton Coldfield, Walsall, Dudley, Halesowen, Stourbridge, Harborne, Dorridge, Earlsdon and many other locations, to allow people to work flexibly, inspired by the concept of "15 minute neighbourhoods".
- Work with councils, WM5G and Building Digital UK **to deliver Gigabit connections and 5G connectivity to offices and business premises across the region**, and **improve home connections** to enable flexible working from home.
- **Continue to support projects to get more young people to aspire to careers in professional services**, such as the successful Birmingham Professional Services Week.
- Work with Birmingham Airport to **ensure a regular number of daily flights to important business destinations** such as Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Dublin and Paris.



The new HSBC UK headquarters under construction in Centenary Square, Birmingham

REINVIGORATING OUR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The West Midlands has an amazing history of creativity, from intricate jewellery and metalwork to the storytelling of Tolkien and Two-tone music. That talent is still here in the region, but sadly over the years much of our creative leadership has been lost. In the screen industry for example, we were left without major TV production facilities after the closure of Pebble Mill in the early 2000s, and many people had to travel to London or Manchester to find work in the industry.

But in the last four years we have begun to regain momentum, with the sector in the region coming together to help create a new generation of creative talent here in the West Midlands.

Creative and digital was the fastest growing sector in the region between 2016 and 2018. We have run skills bootcamps and mentoring for creative startups, and we have advanced plans for two major new facilities in the creative quarter of Digbeth: an international film studios and media village, led by Steven Knight the creator of Peaky Blinders, and a new Creative Content Hub for independent TV and content production. We have made a start at strengthening our creative industries but there's more to do, and our Mayor must continue to champion the sector.

CHANNEL 4: WHAT WE LEARNED

In 2017, the Government announced that there would be a competition between regions of the country to become the home of a new headquarters for Channel 4. **Our shortlisted bid was very strong and it brought the region together like never before, showing off our creative talent, our youth and diversity, and our world-class facilities.**

However, we weren't successful in the end, and Channel 4 decided in 2018 to move jobs from London to Leeds. I was personally hugely disappointed because I thought we were the best choice, but I don't regret the fact that we tried. In fact, **going through the process with Channel 4 helped us to galvanise our own creative sector, work out where our strengths lay, and it has laid the foundations for successes since then, and our successes to come.**

What we learned during the Channel 4 bidding process:

- **The potential of the region when we work together**, particularly in the creative sector.
- **The power of our youth and our diversity to drive creativity** in the future.
- **Our unique location in the middle of the country with unrivalled connectivity**, particularly when High Speed 2 opens.
- **The need to strengthen our 'indie' production sector.** Channel 4 believed that the sector was too small to support them, and had been weakened by many years of production being moved to other regions like London or Manchester.

The experience of bidding for Channel 4, coming together as a region to promote the creative industries and understanding our strengths and our weaknesses, galvanised action in the region, and a whole exciting new programme of activities to strengthen our creative sector.

CREATIVE	
980 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: BBC, McCann Central, Serious Games International, Packt Publishing, Depict Creative, One Black Bear
Worth £4.7 billion every year, growing 15% from 2016-2018 (with Digital)	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 900 people furloughed <i>(Note - does not include self-employed freelancers)</i>

Progress made:

- **Set up Create Central** to bring the screen industry together to lead the development of plans to grow the sector, and **secured £2 million for Create Central to run a programme of activities to boost the film, TV and games sector** in the region.
- **Backing Steven Knight's plans for a world-class film studio and media village in the heart of Digbeth** in Birmingham.
- Championed the development of the **new £18 million Creative Content Hub campus for independent TV production and content development in Digbeth**, which has secured funding and planning permission ready for construction to begin.
- **Funded the development of the Resonance Music Institute in Brierley Hill** to train young people in music and production skills, and supported Birmingham City University's STEAMhouse programme and the redevelopment of the new building at the Old Belmont Works.
- **Running a series of skills bootcamps** to teach young people the skills they need to work in the TV production sector, and **set up the £1.3 million Creative Scale Up programme to help fast-growing creative companies** to scale up their operations, with coaching and advice on topics such as pricing, exporting, intellectual property, pitching and securing financial backing.
- **Invested in a scheme in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter to regenerate a building to create a modern jewellery manufacturing studio**, along with new key worker apartments and commercial space, with 200 year old firm Charles Green & Son.
- **Campaigned for further support for freelancers and self-employed creatives during the Coronavirus pandemic.**

Speaking at the launch of Create Central, the West Midlands group set up to develop our screen industry



SECURED A MAJOR NEW DEAL WITH THE BBC

Over the last four years we have been campaigning to bring back BBC production jobs to the West Midlands, with its great creative heritage, which used to be centred for many years at BBC Pebble Mill. With the arrival of a new BBC Director General, Tim Davie, we have made substantial progress with major relocations to the West Midlands:

- **At least one new primetime drama and one new primetime entertainment series** will be commissioned in the West Midlands.
- **BBC Asian Network and BBC Newsbeat will be relocated to Birmingham**, and the BBC News Data Team will partly relocate to the region.
- **A new peak-time local radio service will be launched in Wolverhampton**, and the regional BBC One West Midlands service will be available in HD for the first time.
- **A new apprenticeship training agency will be piloted in the West Midlands and new learning hubs for young people** will be set up in Birmingham and Wolverhampton.
- **New community digital reporters will improve local news** and BBC Three will create original documentaries with local producers from the region.

Our Create Central group of industry experts will work closely with the BBC to ensure that everyone in the West Midlands can benefit from the increased presence in the region. **This news is another great step in our journey towards being a region with a vibrant creative sector once again.**

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Open the new Mercian Studios in Digbeth and host the production of an Oscar- or BAFTA-winning film or TV series there**, and launch the **Creative Content Hub in Digbeth**.
- **Make Birmingham the national home for eSports and gaming events**, seeking to secure major eSports tournament events for the region and encourage the relocation of industry bodies like the UK eSports Association, and support the existing gaming development cluster in Leamington Spa.
- **Work with the BBC to make their relocation to the West Midlands as smooth as possible, creating new jobs for local people**, and **bid for other production and relocation opportunities which the BBC has yet to decide** to win even more investment in the region.
- **Grow Create Central's skills development bootcamps to give more young people experience in the TV production sector**, and as more productions are based in the West Midlands, get young people on set to see live productions for themselves.
- **Work with the Digital Catapult to develop the Studio UK innovation hub for media production, and win funding to build it in Digbeth.**
- **Support the development of new creative spaces (studios, co-working spaces)** using Combined Authority funds where appropriate to make schemes viable, both in established creative quarters (Digbeth, Coventry city centre) and in other local centres, like the People's Design Studio in Walsall led by local architectural designer Andre-Donovan Reid.
- **Champion creative teaching institutions like the Wolverhampton School of Art and Design, the School of Jewellery at Birmingham City University, and the School of Art and Design at Coventry University**, and explore whether it is possible to deliver more apprenticeships and courses for those who don't want to study at university level.

TURNING CULTURAL EXCELLENCE INTO CREATIVE BUSINESSES

For more information on what Andy has done to support the cultural sector, and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 6 on page 118, including what our plans are for Coventry City of Culture 2021.

EXPANDING OUR GREEN TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

To tackle climate change and improve the environment, a host of new technologies will be needed and these will create significant opportunities for new and existing businesses in the region. As the home of the Industrial Revolution, which kickstarted the increase in carbon emissions, we have a special responsibility to find ways to tackle climate change. If we make the most of this opportunity, we can create huge numbers of well-paid jobs in the region.

Now we have set our regional target of getting to net zero carbon emissions by 2041, there is huge growth potential for the region's businesses in order to make this happen. Whether in manufacturing, the utilities sector, materials research, construction or retrofitting, there will be challenges for businesses in moving to clean technology, and there will be new opportunities. We need to support businesses making these changes, and we need to train young people and reskill existing workers so that they can take advantage of these new jobs.

We have already made progress, in championing plans for a battery Gigafactory to support electric vehicle production, in securing Government funding for retrofitting of insulation measures in people's homes and in adopting new construction technologies. **We must now work with businesses to give them the support they need, following a credible plan for decarbonisation, rather than simply demanding and expecting that they adopt new green standards.**

LOW CARBON	
3,750 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: National Grid, Cadent, Severn Trent, Western Power, Acceleron
Worth £4.2 billion every year, growing 1% from 2016-2018	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 1,300 people furloughed

Progress made:

- **Leading the campaign to bring a battery Gigafactory to the West Midlands**, meeting carmakers and battery manufacturers in the UK and in China, gained agreement to the most suitable site at Coventry Airport, and brokering support from the British Government to secure a new factory.
- **Campaigned successfully for new investment in a domestic retrofit programme**, and **funded a £2 million West Midlands demonstrator** trial to make the case for more funding from Government.
- **Created new courses and facilities to train young people for low carbon jobs**, such as the electric vehicle training centre in Wolverhampton, and won £500,000 to create new 16-week green construction skills bootcamps to train young people in retrofit and energy efficiency construction.
- **Agreed a commitment to low carbon new homes in the West Midlands Design Charter**, and developed plans to attract modular home manufacturing plants to the region.
- **Supported the work of West Midlands research centres such as the Energy Research Accelerator facilities and the Energy Systems Catapult**, and championed the work of Energy Capital which brings together the region's players in the energy sector, and runs a programme of Energy Innovation Zones.
- **Kicked off a new programme of generating low carbon energy for Black Country industrial businesses**, by creating small-scale new power stations using local resources including commercial waste and renewable energy on brownfield sites, after winning funding from Innovate UK.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Secure a major investor (or investors) to build a battery Gigafactory at Coventry Airport and run a dedicated programme to ensure that the proposed Gigafactory for battery manufacturing in the West Midlands develops a local supply chain** in manufactured components, metals and chemicals.
- **Launch a massive regional programme to improve the energy efficiency of homes** with the installation of smart meters and thermostats, wall and loft insulation, double glazing and heat pumps, funded by the Energy Company Obligation and further Government funding for retrofit, and including work to ensure West Midlands engineers and businesses win the contracts.
- **Direct our skills and training funding to provide more training places for the new green jobs** in heat pump installation, electric vehicle manufacture and maintenance, and expanding the existing Government training programme for heating, solar, electrical and retrofit skills at Dudley College to other West Midlands training providers.
- **Make the West Midlands a centre of the manufacturing of modular zero carbon homes,** and attracting new manufacturing facilities to the West Midlands
- **Support regional trials of new technologies** such as using hydrogen to heat homes and to fuel heavy good vehicles, develop heat networks, and **set up new grants and challenges to help low carbon startups invent new and innovative technologies and turn them into profitable businesses,** through the Combined Authority Innovation Board.
- **Champion the proposed National Centre for the Decarbonisation of Heat and win funding for it** to create a manufacturing accelerator, business incubator and skills academy **based at the Tyseley Energy Park.**
- **Seek an Energy Devolution Deal from Government, which would allow us to reshape our energy infrastructure in the region, including the devolution of the Energy Company Obligation and other funds** so that we can coordinate and control our decarbonisation plans as a region, and foster new low carbon businesses and jobs.

ELECTRIFYING THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

For more information on what Andy has done to support the automotive industry in its move towards zero emissions vehicles, and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 1 on page 14.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND REACHING NET ZERO BY 2041

For more information on what Andy has done to tackle climate change, and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 5 on page 104.

GROWING TRADE & INVESTMENT IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

We start as one of the trade and investment success stories of the country, with record levels of investment from overseas, and a higher proportion of exports than other regions. This is down to our world-class businesses making products that people around the world want to buy, like Range Rovers and Jaguars, online games and medical devices, and also due to the favourable conditions for investment in businesses and in property in the region.

To keep up this success and to grow further, we need to work even harder to help our existing businesses export more, and to attract new businesses to the region. We have excellent opportunities to do this in the City of Culture this year and the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022, when the eyes of the world will be on the region. **In the next few years we need to intensify our trade and investment efforts, working with the Government to promote the West Midlands as a brilliant place to do business.**

Progress made:

- **Secured the most new jobs from inward investment of any region outside London** with 35,000 new jobs created from 2017-2020, and maintained high levels of trade in the West Midlands, and a trade surplus with key markets like the USA.
- Secured a further £21 million of Government funding for the **Trade, Tourism and Investment Programme alongside the Commonwealth Games**, aiming at bringing businesses and jobs to the region.
- **Secured the relocation of Government departments and agencies that have a focus on infrastructure and construction to the West Midlands**, including Ministers and senior decision-makers - for example Homes England setting up in Coventry, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government moving over 500 jobs to Wolverhampton, and the Department for Transport to Birmingham.
- **Helped to attract new businesses to the West Midlands**, for example Hydraforce and Guhring manufacturers opening in Birmingham, Lotus setting up new facilities in Coventry, and The Economist setting up its technology unit in Birmingham, and **increased investment from existing businesses** such as BT, Assa Abloy, and Jaguar Land Rover.
- **Set up the West Midlands India Partnership to promote trade, investment and cultural links**, securing new direct flights to Amritsar, new investment from TVS in Norton Motorcycles, and working with Tata to strengthen Jaguar Land Rover.
- **Campaigned successfully for the needs of West Midlands** to be prioritised in the new trade deal with the European Union, particularly the tariff-free trade in goods and Rules of Origin.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Seek full devolution of trade and investment functions and funding to the West Midlands**, including funds to incentivise inward investment in the region like Scotland or Wales.
- **Deliver the Trade, Tourism and Investment programme for the Commonwealth Games**, bringing in an estimated 600 new jobs and over £25 million from tourism and conferences, and attracting new businesses to open up in the region.
- **Secure major investment opportunities in every borough** such as a major battery manufacturer for the Gigafactory in Coventry, and finding new occupiers for Wolverhampton's i9 and i54, DY5 in Dudley, the Life Sciences Park in Selly Oak, Phoenix 10 in Walsall, and UK Central in Solihull.
- **Work intensively with our top fifty existing investors like Jaguar Land Rover and Geely** to increase their investments here and bring further jobs to the region.
- **Undertake a rapid piece of work looking at the opportunities for reshoring following the Coronavirus pandemic**, particularly in the health and life sciences manufacturing sector, so that we can manufacture our own vaccines, medicines and equipment here in the West Midlands, following the successful return by Mondelez of the production of Dairy Milk to Bournville with a new £15 million investment in the factory site.

- **Support the region's big local industrial strategy priorities**, such as the film studios and media village in Digbeth, attracting new low carbon green jobs in retrofit, green manufacturing and recycling, and securing new investment in modular construction manufacturing facilities in the West Midlands
- **Push for further Government relocations of 'Non Departmental Public Bodies' in our key industrial sectors** such as life sciences, construction, transport and mobility, creating more jobs for local people in local centres, not just in Birmingham city centre, and as part of the new Department for Transport headquarters in Birmingham, **push for the teams responsible for electric vehicles and autonomous vehicles to be based here** (the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles and Centre for Autonomous and Connected Vehicles).
- **Work with the Government to drive down tariffs and other barriers (such as recognition of professional qualifications and data sharing) to the automotive industry in trade talks** with the US, China, the EU and other major markets.
- **Increase investment in the West Midlands Growth Company to allow the organisation to develop further expertise** to land big investment deals and create more jobs in the West Midlands.



Artist's impression of the proposed West Midlands battery Gigafactory

CONNECTING THE WEST MIDLANDS TO THE WORLD THROUGH BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT

Birmingham Airport is our gateway to the world, with passenger travel for business, study and leisure, and freight operations connecting us to over 150 destinations. **The airport supports not only jobs at the airport itself, but also in our exporting businesses, our tourism sector, our universities and much more.** It also makes it far easier to get away on holiday than travelling down to a London airport.

Before Coronavirus, the airport was seeing a steady growth in passengers, new routes opening, and plans for around £500 million investment in new facilities to make travel easier. However, the airport has been particularly hard-hit by the pandemic, and **we must do everything we can to support it as people begin to travel again.**

Before the pandemic, progress made:

- **Secured new direct flights to Amritsar, Vienna, the Gambia, Poznan and Krakow**, and British Airways returning to Birmingham with routes to Florence, Palma and Malaga.
- **Backed the Airport's target of becoming net zero carbon neutral by 2033**, with on-site renewable energy generation and more fuel efficient aircraft.
- **Ensured that there are no plans for a second runway** in the Birmingham Airport masterplan.
- **Secured the Government confirmation of High Speed 2**, which will connect Birmingham Airport to London in 38 minutes.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Support the airport in its efforts to restart flights, and get its staff back into work** after the pandemic.
- **Continue to champion the case for direct flights to growth markets like Mumbai and Shanghai.**
- **Ensure that the 'People Mover' from the High Speed 2 station to the Airport is a slick and convenient experience.**



BRINGING LIFE BACK TO OUR TOWN AND CITY CENTRES

It has been a tough time for our town centres for a long time now. Even before the pandemic, the growth of online retail made it difficult for high street shops to compete. Our habits as customers have changed, and that has meant the end of many well-loved brands and vacant units in our town centres. But we know that our local centres are places that we have a special connection to, that we grew up in, and that mean a lot to us. **So we have started the process of looking at these town centres with fresh eyes: how can we create places that are clean, pleasant and where people want to spend time?**

Firstly, we need to make sure we help high street businesses, giving them financial support to get back on their feet after the pandemic, and looking again at the unfair business rates system. Then we need to look at some of the space on high streets that won't be used for retail in the future, and find creative new uses. That could be turning some into affordable housing, or office space, or cultural and community facilities. We've made a start, in places across the West Midlands. All this will take time and investment, and it will require us to create a new type of town centre: our hometowns deserve nothing less. **We need bustling and lively town and city centres, to make sure this region remains the best place to live in the world.**

RETAIL	
24,300 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: Aldi, Poundland, Marks & Spencer, Next, Primark, WHSmith, Holland & Barrett
Worth £12.4 billion every year, growing 6% from 2016-2018	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 77,500 people furloughed

Progress made:

- **Saw massive investment from the successful bids that have won over £100 million of Government funding for town centres** including Brierley Hill, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton.
- **Delivering our own major regional investment in high streets and local centres** including the City Centre South transformation of Coventry city centre and improvements to the public realm in Birmingham, the Portersfield redevelopment and the new Metro line and bus interchange in Dudley, and regeneration plans for village centres like Kingshurst.
- **Agreed masterplans or vision documents for areas such as Sutton Coldfield, Solihull, Bloxwich and Walsall** as the starting point for regenerating those places, creating lively and vibrant local centres.
- **Set up the expert Town Centres Taskforce to advise on bringing in more investment from the private sector** to West Midlands high streets.
- **Demolished local eyesore buildings like Cavendish House in Dudley and Bull Street car park in West Bromwich**, and bought derelict buildings in town centres to be regenerated like Pipe Hall Bilston.
- **Improved the look and feel of high streets**, for example funded public realm improvements in Birmingham, Coventry, and the Soho Road, and **funded cycling and walking improvements** through the Better Streets Community Fund.
- **Successfully called for Government to implement new digital taxes on online companies**, secure reductions in business rates and a Government commitment to a full review of Business Rates, to make sure high street shops are not at a disadvantage.
- **Delivered better trains and buses to help people get into local town centres for shopping or entertainment**, renovated stations at Wolverhampton, Coventry and bus stations in Walsall and Coventry, and funded the new Dudley interchange.



Tearing down Bull Street car park to make way for regeneration in West Bromwich with local MP Nicola Richards

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Support local areas in using the over £100 million of new funding secured through the Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund to transform their areas in the West Midlands over the next three years**, and campaign for more funding from Government to expand the regeneration programme, for example for Dudley town centre.
- **Focus on local high streets in areas of the West Midlands that don't normally get investment**, while continuing with the major redevelopment of Coventry city centre, and support Birmingham and Wolverhampton with major sites in their city centres.
- **Explore setting up new local co-working office spaces in our local centres** such as Sutton Coldfield, Walsall, Dudley, Halesowen, Stourbridge, Harborne, Dorridge, Earlsdon and many other locations, to allow people to work flexibly, inspired by the concept of "15 minute neighbourhoods".
- **Launch a West Midlands Commission on Business Taxation** to develop new ideas that could inform the Government's review of Business Rate, to make sure the town centre shops, hospitality and leisure businesses are supported, and their value in creating thriving local centres is acknowledged by the tax system.
- **Create mini-transport plans for local centres**, focusing on high quality public transport, safe cycling and walking options, and new local mobility services, for example app-based on demand transport.
- **Champion the masterplans for areas such as Solihull and Sutton Coldfield**, working with partners to make them vibrant thriving local centres for the community.
- **Support the redevelopment of local centres and bids for funding from Government** using the Combined Authority Housing and Land team and the expert taskforce, depending on what support local authorities need, and **look at the potential of bringing in new cash to regenerate town centres by establishing Joint Venture Partnerships with private investors** such as pension funds for entire areas of town centres.
- **Set up a new 'Local Centres Fund' that can be accessed by areas that have not secured Government funding through the Towns Fund or the Future High Streets Fund, such as Tipton, Harborne and Northfield**, accessed through the Combined Authority's Single Commissioning Framework, and potentially based on the revolving model of the existing Collective Investment Fund.
- **Take a more proactive approach to the Combined Authority's own use of Compulsory Purchase powers** to speed up the development of stalled sites and assembling land in town centres, working in tandem with local authorities.

ANDY STREET'S 'BLUEPRINT' FOR THE MODERN BRITISH TOWN CENTRE

Every high street and town centre in the UK has its own unique characteristics, and there is no 'one-size' solution to the challenges they are facing. This 'blueprint' sets out my view of twelve different elements that local leaders should consider when trying to create thriving and successful places for their people.

Action point	West Midlands example
1. Urban Living: Providing homes within walking distance of workplaces gives people more cash and free time to spend it. This could mean repurposing surplus business premises to provide quality urban housing.	New canalside homes being developed with Urban Splash at Walsall Waterfront in the town centre, next to the art gallery, restaurants, bars and shopping
2. Co-Working in the Town Centre: Our start-up hot beds are too often focussed on bespoke office space in higher rent areas – why not drive this dynamo into every town centre?	The Exchange in Moseley hosts buzzing creative startups
3. Experience-led Retail: Traditional retailers recognise that they need to evolve to differentiate themselves from online, focusing more on the personal touch and the face-to-face experience you can't get online. Think specialist retailers, mixed-use spaces, local shops and some new concepts we don't even know about yet.	Wine tasting, sushi, hat shops and more at the Great Western Arcade in Birmingham.
4. Beyond Retail: A thriving modern town centre needs to offer far more than shopping. There are lots of reasons people come to a place: leisure, work, living and accessing public services. Successful places need people to want to come and spend time there.	Bilston has a thriving market, and the BID puts on activities like the Christmas Street Festival to attract footfall for businesses and for residents to enjoy
5. Public Services for All: We need to think radically about how people access public services. As the focal point of public transport, town centres should be the natural place for police stations, health and services, skills training and careers advice.	In Dorridge, Solihull, Sainsburys built a doctor's surgery and small retail units alongside their main store
6. Green and Clean: Town centres must be places that people enjoy being in. That means safe dedicated cycle and walking routes, green space galore, and elegant street design and street furniture.	Coventry is developing an urban pocket park at Abbotts Lane featuring a landscaped area around Radford Brook to link the city centre with the north of the city.

-
7. **Safe and Secure:** People need to feel safe for them to spend time and money in town centres. Good lighting, CCTV, proactive policing and even simple things like secure bike racks are an absolute must.
- In central Birmingham, the Colmore Business District has appointed wardens to give helpful and reassuring support to businesses and visitors.
-
8. **Easy to Get To:** Whether it's bus, train, metro, cycling, or walking, town centres must be easy to get into and out of. And public transport beats driving wherever possible. Government must invest in the transport links needed to create thriving high footfall town centres.
- The extension of the West Midlands Metro from Wednesbury to Dudley and Brierley Hill will bring people into those town centres quickly and easily.
-
9. **Accelerate Technology Changes:** Technology is disrupting retail, transport and all other industries. We can't turn the clock back, we need to accelerate the future of the town centre. We must adapt and change, like providing pick up options for online deliveries.
- Contactless payment methods, including on phones, have reduced the use of cash significantly, and will continue to do so after the Coronavirus pandemic.
-
10. **Strong Local Leadership:** Town centres need coordination to make sure they provide a good experience for residents and customers. Whether it is local councils masterplanning, Business Improvement Districts co-ordinating, a single landlord or landlords working together, the best town centres are the most joined up.
- Sutton Coldfield Town Council and the Sutton Coldfield BID developed a new masterplan for the town centre.
-
11. **A Fair Tax System:** Traditional and online retailers should be treated equivalently and we should review business rates to even the playing field for town centre shops.
- Government has helped businesses through the Coronavirus pandemic by granting business rates relief for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses.
-
12. **Retain Local Character:** Each town centre has a character of its own that makes the locals love it. Whether it is a bustling high street serving the local Asian community or a quaint old market town, we celebrate a town centre's unique selling point.
- Soho Road's Diwali celebrations in Birmingham are run by the local BID in conjunction with local faith groups.

BACKING OUR HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM SECTORS

Our restaurants, bars, nightclubs, leisure centres, hotels, arts venues and sports facilities are just some of the many reasons that the West Midlands is such a great place to live in and to visit. Businesses in these sectors have been hit hard by the Coronavirus pandemic, and they will need as much support as they can get from the Mayor, the Government and the public to get back on their feet when restrictions end. We must do everything we can to support our hospitality and tourism in the region.

HOSPITALITY, CULTURE & SPORT	
10,600 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: National Exhibition Centre, Ricoh Arena, hotels, restaurants, cafes
Worth £4.1 billion every year, growing 0.1% from 2016-2018	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 100,800 people furloughed

Progress made:

- **Oversaw an increase in international tourism to the West Midlands** by an estimated 5% (70,000 more visits) between 2017 and 2019, before the pandemic, and **agreed a West Midlands Tourism Strategy to grow the number of visitors to the region** and increase the value of tourism to the economy by 9% by 2030.
- Secured a further £21 million of Government funding for the **Trade, Tourism and Investment Programme alongside the Commonwealth Games**, aiming at bringing businesses and jobs to the region.
- **Urged Government to provide financial support for the West Midlands hospitality industry during the Coronavirus pandemic**, as part of the Hope for Hospitality campaign, after which the Chancellor announced a £4.6 billion package of new funding support, including grants for leisure and hospitality businesses of up to £9,000.
- **Supported the development of hotels and conference venues in the region**, providing funding where necessary, for example for the new Telegraph Hotel in Coventry, the new Travelodge opposite Walsall College and the new Commonwealth Convention Centre at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry.
- Introduced **more evening and weekend trains** to boost local town centres and access to cinemas, restaurants, theatres and music venues.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Work with Government to ensure that there is a proper recovery programme through the spring and the summer for the hospitality industry** in the West Midlands as the Coronavirus lockdowns end.
- **Make the most of Coventry City of Culture 2021 and Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022** to bring visitors to the region and to raise the profile of the West Midlands around the world.
- **Deliver the Trade, Tourism and Investment programme for the Commonwealth Games**, bringing in an estimated 600 new jobs and over £25 million from tourism and conferences, and attracting new businesses to open up in the region.
- **Back the development of new tourist attractions, like the proposed Peaky Blinders village attraction** around the new Mercian Studios, and the **Birmingham Highline viaduct walkway project** in Digbeth.
- **Explore the possibility of developing a major Food Festival in the West Midlands** to showcase our world-class cuisine, building on the success of the Colmore Food Festival, Digbeth Dining Club, War Memorial Park Food Festival in Coventry and the Wolverhampton Food Festival.

- **Create Lonely Planet style guides and online itineraries for visitors to the West Midlands**, improve tourist attractions in the region like the Black Country Geopark, and explore the potential for opening up new tourist attractions like **opening up the Anchor Exchange tunnels or the BT Tower to visitors**.
- **Support regional bids for further Government funding**, for example by becoming one of the UK's first Tourism Action Zones or winning investment from VisitEngland's Discover England Fund.
- **Continue to back the work of the West Midlands Growth Company in attracting trade, tourism and investment** to the region.
- **Establish a regional leadership structure for the hospitality industry**, bringing together key businesses, Business Improvement Districts, councils and trade associations like UK Hospitality to represent the sector and to develop new growth plans.
- **Appoint an expert advisor on the night-time economy** to join our Town Centres Taskforce and support our work on revitalising town centres across the region, including advising on safety issues,
- **Work with the hospitality and leisure sector to increase footfall and bring people back into our town and city centres** after the Coronavirus pandemic, as we continue the Combined Authority's programme of regenerating town centres.



Sharing a pint in Walsall with leader of Walsall Council, Mike Bird

MAKING SURE BUSINESSES HAVE THE SPACE THEY NEED

To grow and create more jobs for people here in the West Midlands, our businesses need the right premises. Whether it is office space in our city centres, manufacturing space on our industrial parks, retail space on the high street or co-working space for startups, we need to make sure there is enough space, and it is of the right quality to be competitive with other city-regions.

With housing we have been successful in rapidly increasing the number of homes built in the region, through our cleaning up of derelict brownfield sites, and our practical approach of unblocking developments. **in the next three years, we will take a similar pragmatic approach to employment land**, working with councils and businesses to find the right space for them. The focus will be on **regenerating existing brownfield sites**, and on supporting our priority sectors, which will provide the highly paid jobs of the future in the region.

Progress made:

- **Worked to identify sites for key regional industrial priorities**, for example, leading the region's efforts to agree on the most suitable site for the battery Gigafactory, now planned for Coventry Airport.
- **Provided financial support to get individual sites ready**, such as Phoenix 10 in Walsall and the West Works at Longbridge.
- **Prepared an investment prospectus and site pipeline** with over £10 billion worth of employment land opportunities across the West Midlands.
- **Championed our inward investment campaigns to bring in occupiers** to the region to create jobs for local people, such as the relocation of BT to Snowhill Three in Birmingham, Homes England to Friargate in Coventry, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to Wolverhampton.
- **Invested over £140 million so far in employment land through Combined Authority Investment Funds** to create 3,700 new jobs and nearly 1.7 million square feet of commercial floor space.
- **Tailored our support to different sectors, for example** provided funding for the Friargate development for commercial office space, **secured £50 million Government funding for UK Central to create more employment land rather than car parks**, and supported the creative sector studio and content hub developments in Digbeth in Birmingham.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Develop a strong pipeline of employment sites in the West Midlands**, unlocking projects on a pragmatic site-by-site basis, following the successful approach we have used to accelerate house building in the region.
- **Focus on making a success of the large-scale transformational sites in the region**, such as the Knowledge Quarter around Curzon Street station, the redevelopment of Snow Hill station in Birmingham, Coventry Friargate, West Bromwich town centre, Coventry city centre and the Gigafactory site at Coventry Airport, UK Central and the town centre in Solihull, Iron Park Moxley in Walsall, and Westside, the Molineux Quarter and the Springfield Quarter in Wolverhampton.
- **Seek further grant funding from Government to develop an Employment Land Fund to unlock sites and create jobs in the West Midlands**, similar to the Land Fund granted as part of the West Midlands Housing Deal.
- **Work with Government to develop a Recyclable Investment Fund to develop large-scale strategic regeneration sites in the West Midlands**, with the Combined Authority working with private investors to share the risk and the rewards, building on the success of the Collective Investment Fund and the Revolving Investment Fund.
- **Work with industry to trial new ways to fit more industry and warehousing on existing sites, by using new technology** such as using robotic automation to increase storage density.
- **Accelerate the work of the West Midlands Public Land Taskforce** in identifying, assembling and using land to create new homes or employment land sites.



Before Combined Authority investment: Phoenix 10, Walsall



After Combined Authority investment: Artist's impression, Phoenix 10, Walsall

CREATING A WORLD-CLASS TRANSPORT SYSTEM

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
"Lead a new golden era for trains"	Oversaw an increase in train ridership of 13% in the West Midlands in the two years before the pandemic. Brought new trains with more seats onto the network to reduce overcrowding, an upgraded fleet of trains on order, upgraded Wolverhampton and Coventry stations , and secured funding and permissions to re-open five stations across the region.	
"Start the construction of the Midlands Metro extension to Brierley Hill"	Secured the most funding ever for Metro extensions in the region and started construction of lines to Dudley, Brierley Hill, Edgbaston and Digbeth . Completed the extension to Centenary Square on time and oversaw an increase in Metro journeys of 3.5% in the West Midlands in the year before the pandemic.	
"Make buses clean, safe and fast"	Froze fares for four years in a row and introduced low fares zones to make tickets cheaper . Introduced new clean buses, and fare capping to save bus users money. All this led to increased bus speeds for the first time since 2006 and we saw an increase in bus journeys of 3% in the West Midlands in the year before the pandemic, compared with a decrease in other parts of the country.	
"Supercharge cycling and walking"	Invested over £40 million in new cycling infrastructure in the region, launched a 'Boris bike' cycle hire scheme , and ran schemes across the region getting over 14,000 young people walking to school.	
"Bust congestion"	Opened the first Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre, to tackle disruption and keep traffic flowing across the region . Secured funding to upgrade major traffic blackspots like Birchley Island, M6 Junction 10 and M42 Junction 6, resulting in faster traffic seen in increased bus speeds.	

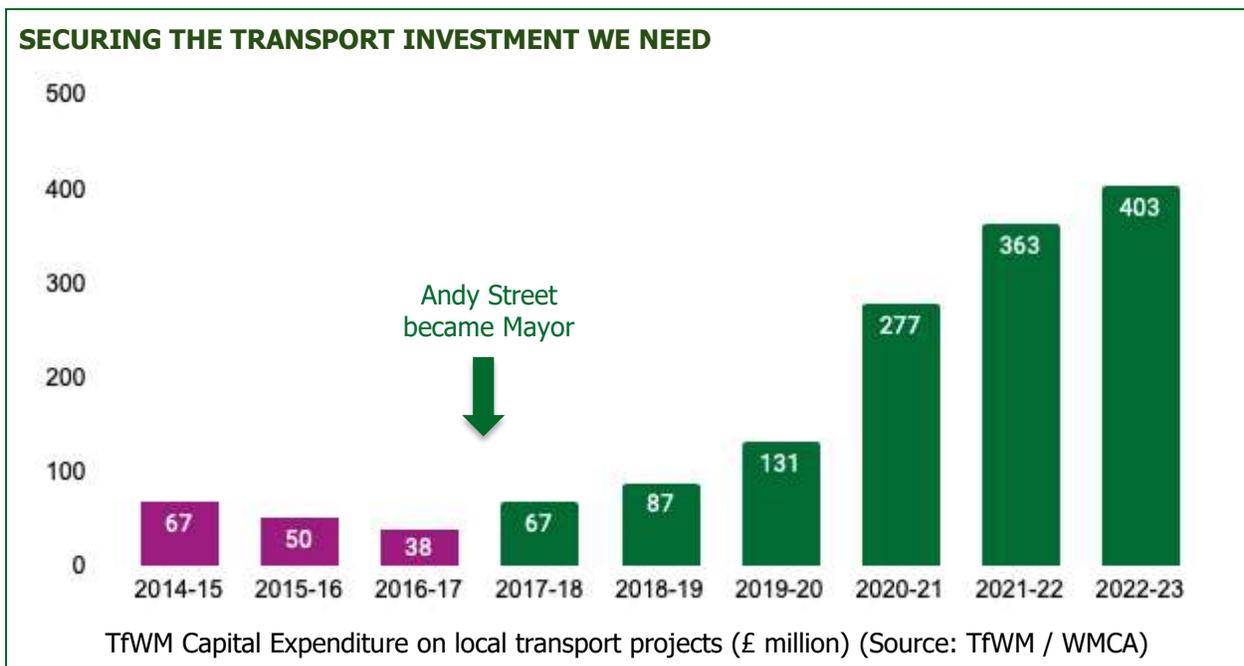
KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Double spending on the public transport network	Double transport spending in the region by bringing in more investment from Government without raising council tax on local people, building on the seven times increase in transport investment since taking over as Mayor, from £38 million in 2016/17 to £277 million in 2020/21.	
Make massive progress delivering our long-term transport plan	Open the new metro stations in Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton, begin expansion into North Solihull, reopen five rail stations in Walsall and South Birmingham in the next three years , and make progress on eighteen other new stations across the region.	
Deliver cleaner, safer, quicker buses with low fares	Build on the success of the four-year bus fare freeze , roll out more hydrogen and electric buses including making Coventry's fleet all-electric. Improve bus waiting areas in urban centres across the region, and look for more opportunities for prioritised rapid bus routes .	
Take bold steps to get people cycling and walking	Agree a major programme of new segregated cycle routes and complete the rollout of the West Midlands bike hire scheme, with a new Executive Commissioner for cycling and walking at Transport for West Midlands .	
Get driverless vehicles on the roads and become the UK's home of transport innovation	Become the home of driverless vehicle testing in the UK , building on our existing testbeds and 5G expertise, complete the rollout of eScooters , and explore whether an on demand bus service could be used to provide better services for rural areas of the West Midlands.	

A WORLD-CLASS PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK BY 2040

The lack of an effective public transport system has held us back as a region for too long. The historic lack of investment means that our towns and cities have been left behind better connected places in the UK, like London and Manchester, and around the world. We know that the easier it is to travel in our cities, towns and villages, the more convenient it is for residents, and the more productive our region becomes.

In the last four years we have started to turn this story around. We are investing billions of pounds in trams, buses, cycling, rail and road, having been successful at winning more funding from the Government. The amount of capital investment planned in this region this year alone is seven times what it was in 2015, with £1.1 billion already secured through to 2026. And we are turning that cash into steady progress on our transport plans. There's still a long way to go, but with the right leadership and by working together as a region, we are making progress.





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Launching Andy's transport plan at Aldridge Transport Museum

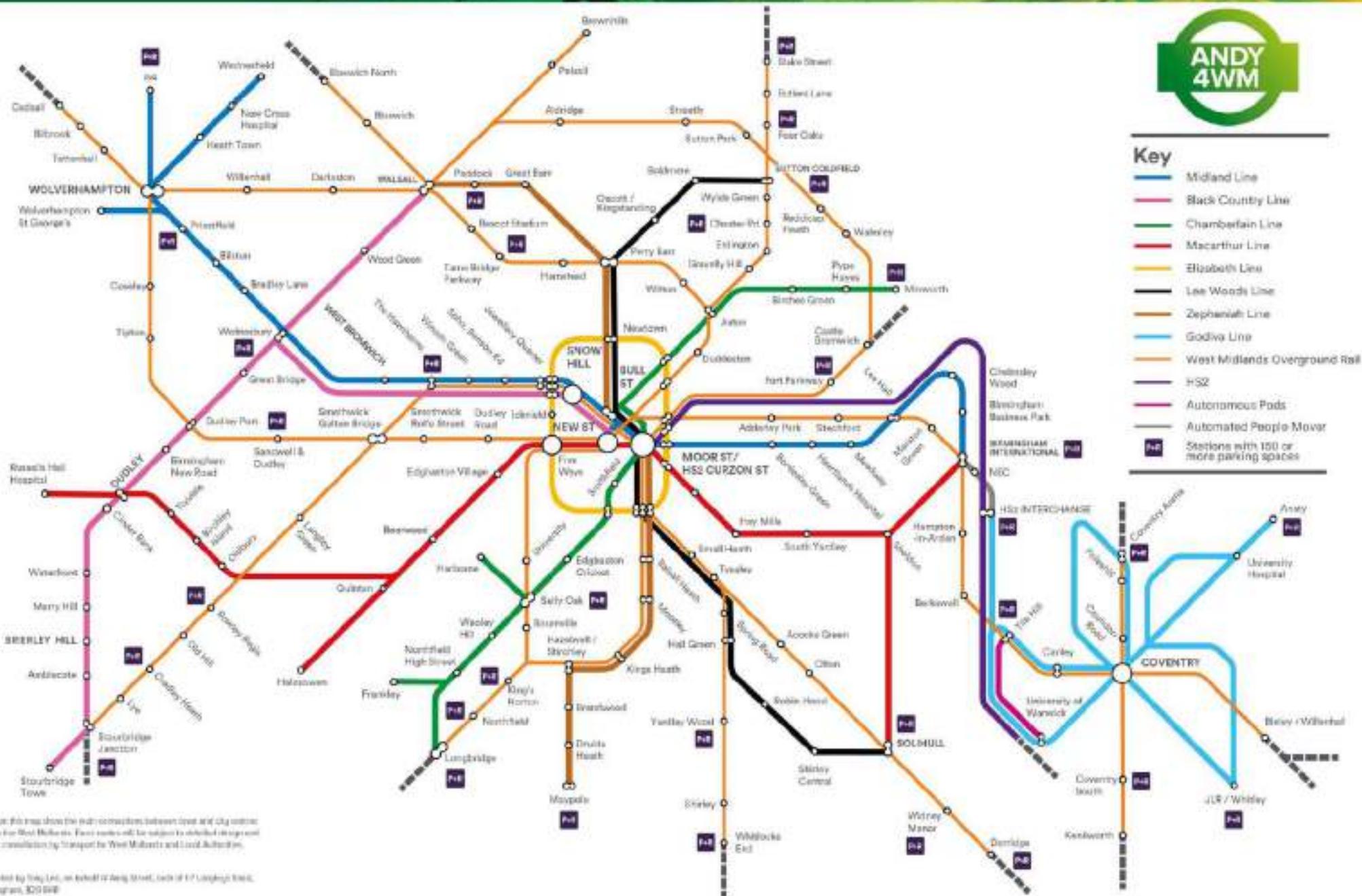
SETTING THE LEVEL OF AMBITION FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

We need a transport plan to match our ambition for our region, connecting communities that haven't had Metro or rail lines for decades, and restoring pride in the West Midlands. My 2040 vision to transform transport over the next twenty years will take hard work, patience and sustained investment, and that's why we must forge ahead, building on the progress we've made already.

- Open **eight new Metro lines**, build **150 miles of track**, with around **380 new stops**.
- Open **twenty three new rail stations** across the West Midlands, including:
 - Re-opening the **Camp Hill line** and stations in **Moseley, King's Heath and Hazelwell**.
 - Re-opening the **Walsall to Wolverhampton line** and stations in **Darlaston and Willenhall**.
 - Re-opening **Aldridge station** and the **Sutton Park line**, and building a new station in **Tettenhall**.
 - Build three new stations in Coventry at **Coundon Road, Foleshill, and Binley**.
 - Build two more new stations in Birmingham at **Balsall Heath** and at **Dudley Road / Aberdeen Street**, as well as at **Pelsall and Brownhills**.
- Use cutting edge technology such as **'very light rail' trams, bus on demand** and **driverless autonomous pods** to connect key sites in **Coventry**, such as the **University of Warwick, Jaguar Land Rover, Ansty and the City Centre**.
- The total cost of this investment in rail and Metro would be around **£15 billion**, supported by **additional government funding, contributions from housing and commercial developers, and future ticket income**.
- **Improve bus routes across the region with rapid dedicated routes**, and the roll out of electric and hydrogen buses to the whole fleet.
- **Realise the 500-mile Starley Network of cycling routes across the region**, investing more than ever before in high-quality segregated infrastructure.

But this isn't a grand vision without a hope of it actually happening. **We have spent the last four years making real progress** in building new stations, extending the Metro, improving bus, Metro and train services, and working on getting more people cycling and walking in the region. **There's more to do, and we must be ambitious in our efforts to create a world-class public transport system here in the West Midlands**.

ANDY STREET'S 2040 PLAN FOR METRO AND RAIL IN THE WEST MIDLANDS



- Key**
- Midland Line
 - Black Country Line
 - Chamberlain Line
 - Macarthur Line
 - Elizabeth Line
 - Lee Woods Line
 - Zephaniah Line
 - Godiva Line
 - West Midlands Overground Rail
 - HS2
 - Autonomous Pods
 - - - Automated People Mover
 - P+R Stations with 150 or more parking spaces

Lines on this map show the main connections between local and city centres across the West Midlands. Some routes will be subject to detailed design and public consultation by Transport for West Midlands and Local Authorities.

Prepared by Skey Ltd, on behalf of Andy Street, leader of Tameshley Council, Birmingham, 2019

“ “ New carriages on their way on the Cross-City line and the West Coast Mainline ” ”



New rail carriages at Wylde Green Station in Sutton Coldfield

MORE TRAINS WITH MORE SPACE, RUNNING ON TIME

Before the Coronavirus pandemic, we were making excellent progress on improving our rail system, with new carriages being brought onto busy routes, punctuality improving and new stations being built. But since the pandemic hit, we are facing a very different situation. **We need to rebuild the confidence to travel following the vaccination programme, and get our rail improvement plans back on track.** We'll need to rethink how passengers want to use the network, for example with more people working from home part of the time.

However, we can be confident that the fundamentals that support growth in rail travel remain strong. The West Midlands is a successful region with a growing economy, and a growing need for commuter rail services. Our increased focus on urgently tackling climate change will mean we need more capacity for commuters switching from driving to public transport. **Our commitment to improving rail services remains stronger than ever following the pandemic.**

Progress made:

- **Oversaw an 13% increase** in the number of rail journeys in the West Midlands in the two years as Mayor before the Coronavirus pandemic, with nearly 15 million more journeys than in 2016.
- **Worked with operators to upgrade trains and increase the number of carriages on key routes**, with refurbished trains on the Snow Hill lines, and the introduction of new trains on the Hereford and Shrewsbury lines to Birmingham. Orders are now placed for 108 new all-electric carriages for the Cross-City Line, and a further 225 for the West Coast Mainline route which passes through Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Coventry.
- **Held train operators to account for their poor performance** in Autumn 2019, resulting in a £20 million fine that will be used to improve train services in the region, and seeing a **29% improvement in the number of trains arriving on time**, and **cancellations down by 39% following the intervention.**
- Introduced **more evening and weekend trains** to boost local town centres and access to cinemas, restaurants, theatres and music venues.
- **Secured commitments by West Midlands Trains in their franchise agreement to improved carriages with more seats, more space and charging plugs and free wifi for passengers**, and secured commitments to protected vital services like the three trains per hour service from London to Coventry in the West Coast Mainline Avanti franchise agreement.
- **Upgraded Coventry and Wolverhampton stations**, which are currently under construction, and **funded rebuilds of University station and Perry Barr station**, with more **major upgrades planned** in the next few years.
- Finalised all the preparatory work including planning permissions, designs, agreeing the timetable and securing the funding for the **new stations in Darlaston, Willenhall, Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell / Stirchley**, ready to begin construction and open for new services in 2023.
- **Completed feasibility studies into the proposed new station** at Aldridge and acquired the land for the station, and put in a bid to restore the link between Brierley Hill and Stourbridge.
- **Submitted bids for Government funding for new stations** in The Fort, Castle Bromwich, Tettenhall, Streetly, Sutton Park, Reddica Heath, Walmley, Coundon Road, Foleshill and Binley.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Open Darlaston, Willenhall, Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell stations** to new services by the end of 2023.
- **Win the funding to re-open Aldridge station, and progress our plan to re-open the whole Sutton Park Line**, which combined with the Camp Hill line would create a whole new cross-city route.
- **Accelerate the re-opening of Tettenhall station in Wolverhampton, and Coundon Road, Foleshill and Binley stations in Coventry.**
- **Explore new stations in Birmingham at Balsall Heath and at Dudley Road / Aberdeen Street**, as well as at **Pelsall and Brownhills.**

- **Win funding for the new proposed 'Stourbridge Dasher' services from Stourbridge to Brierley Hill to connect with the Metro.**
- **Complete upgrades at University station and Perry Barr station, both important gateways for visitors during the Commonwealth Games** in summer 2022.
- After the pandemic, **work with the train operators to ensure that trains in the region are as clean and safe as possible**, and increase passenger confidence as people go back to their workplaces, and **keep up the pressure on West Midlands Trains to improve reliability and increase capacity** on their trains.
- **Work with West Midlands Trains to roll out 5G on trains and in stations**, so that you can reliably stream services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime on the way to work.
- **Introduce new more flexible fares, for example three-day per week season tickets**, to reduce costs for commuters who want to spend more timing working from home.
- **Complete the detailed business case for Bordesley Chords and aim to secure the funding from Government**, in order to allow trains every 15 minutes on the Camp Hill Line.
- Lobby for the funding to deliver rail improvements, like the **fourth platform at Snow Hill station, improvements at Kings Norton station and better links to Leicester, Nottingham and Derby (and re-open Coventry to Leicester)**, as part of the Midlands Rail Hub project.
- **Improve the quality of the pedestrian links between Moor Street, New Street and the new HS2 station at Curzon Street.**
- **Support the next phase of the Nuneaton, Coventry, Kenilworth, Leamington Spa rail improvement project.**
- **Continue the work to develop feasibility studies and business cases** for the 23 new rail stations in my 2040 vision.
- **Explore the feasibility of reopening the Remembrance Line** to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, on the Lichfield to Burton line.
- **Campaign to secure more direct regional control of West Midlands train services** following the Government's Williams Rail Review, so that we have **more control over improving services**, and can **use proceeds of growing passenger numbers to finance the building of new stations and improving infrastructure**, as we have done with West Midlands Metro.
- **Champion the development of new clean rail technologies in the West Midlands**, for example Vivarail's clean battery-powered trains and hydrogen trains with the University of Birmingham / Porterbrook team.

HUGE PROGRESS ON REOPENING RAIL STATIONS SINCE 2017, WITH 23 NEW STATIONS IN THE 2040 PLAN

✔ = completed since Andy Street was elected Mayor in May 2017

	Date Closed	Candidate station	Feasibility study	Bid to Govt	Funding secured	Location secured	Planning permission	Timetable agreed	Construction started	Trains running
Kenilworth	1965								2017	✔
HS2 Curzon Street	1893		2017	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Haze✔well	2028-31
HS2 Interchange	-		2017	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	2028-31
Moseley	1941	2017	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Nov 2021	Dec 2023
Kings Heath	1941	2017	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Nov 2021	Dec 2023
Stirchley / Hazelwell	1941	2017	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Nov 2021	Dec 2023
Darlaston	1965	2017	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	May 2021	May 2023
Willenhall	1965	2017	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	May 2021	May 2023
Aldridge	1965	2017	✔	✔		✔				
Brierley Hill to Stourbridge link	1962	2017	✔	✔		✔				
The Fort	-	2017	Initial	✔						
Castle Bromwich	1968	2017	Initial	✔						
Balsall Heath	1941	2017								
Tettenhall	1932	✔	Initial	✔						
Streetly	1965	✔	Initial	✔						
Sutton Park	1965	✔	Initial	✔						
Reddicap Heath	-	✔	Initial	✔						
Walmley	1965	✔	Initial	✔						
Coundon Road	1965	✔	Initial	✔						
Foleshill	1965	✔	Initial	✔						
Binley	-	✔	Initial	✔						
Pelsall	1965	✔								
Brownhills	1965	✔								
Dudley Road	1957	✔								

DEPARTURES
 BIRMINGHAM
 NEW STREET
 TO: KINGS NORTON
 Via
 Moseley
 Kings Heath
 Stirchley/
 Hazelwell
 WEST MIDLANDS
 RAILWAY



HIGH SPEED 2: WHY IT MATTERS, EVEN IF YOU DON'T GO TO LONDON

The new High Speed 2 railway is the largest infrastructure project in Europe and is expected to cost around £88 billion. This new railway line, with the West Midlands in its centre, has huge potential to bring economic growth to the region. Some say that HS2 is only good for business people who work regularly in London or other cities. However, **the most significant benefits of the project will be seen by local people right here in the West Midlands:**

- **Better local rail services:** With fast inter-city trains moving onto the new lines, space will be freed up for us to run more local commuter services, meaning, for example more frequent trains on the Coventry to Wolverhampton corridor.
- **Jobs for our young people:** HS2 is expected to create 175,000 new jobs and 5,000 apprenticeships for young people in the region, and these opportunities have begun with over 12,000 jobs created already and 300 businesses in the region winning contracts.
- **Bringing businesses into the region:** You can see the cranes putting up new office buildings near to Curzon Street today. HS2 has already brought huge investment into the region, and those new businesses will mean new jobs for local people.

Progress made:

- **Fought for HS2 to go ahead, championing the project directly to the Prime Minister, who confirmed the project in 2020.**
- **Ran the Construction Gateway training scheme to train over 2,000 local unemployed people in construction skills** using funding from the Government's National Retraining Scheme.
- **Held a summit and workshops to help local firms get contracts on the High Speed 2 programme**, such as McAuliffe's of Bilston, Armac Demolition of Solihull, Fitzgerald Contractors of Birmingham and Forkers of West Bromwich.
- **Committed around £100 million of regional funds to ensure that infrastructure around the UK Central site** is fit for purpose, for example the connection between Birmingham International and HS2 is quick and convenient and local roads don't get too congested for local residents.
- **Won an additional £50 million from Government to transform the area around the Interchange station at UK Central** in Solihull from car parks into thriving office buildings, housing and an innovation campus.
- **Agreed a new HS2 Growth Strategy to create jobs and new businesses** in the region, with HS2 and councils.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Ensure that HS2 gets built from London to Birmingham on time**, and campaign for both routes from the West Midlands, to Manchester and to Leeds, to be completed.
- **Continue work to secure HS2 construction jobs for local young people and contracts for West Midlands firms.**
- **Support the redevelopment of the Curzon Street station and the area around Curzon Street**, potentially incorporating a new Museum of Science and Industry, working with Thinktank.
- **Support the development of the Interchange station and the UK Central area around it**, incorporating new housing, businesses and a health innovation campus, and bring in big inward investments to act as anchor tenants.
- **Continue to campaign for the HS1 / HS2 link to be reinstated**, to allow direct trains from Birmingham to Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and beyond.



“ “ The benefits of HS2 are better local services and more jobs for local people ” ”

BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS METRO SYSTEM

City-regions around the world have developed extensive Metro and underground networks over the last hundred and fifty years, yet until 2017 the West Midlands Metro had only one line. **Given our ambition to be a world-class city-region, we need a huge expansion of the network to catch up** with our international rivals.

We've made great progress, bringing in more funding for Metro in the last four years than ever before, and getting construction started. Given the preparatory work we have done, the rate of building will rapidly accelerate over the next few years. We can be confident that with a credible plan, a Mayor who can bring in the funding from Government, and a disciplined approach to construction, we will soon see a Metro system we can all be proud of in the West Midlands.

Progress made:

- Oversaw a **3.5% increase in the number of passengers on the West Midlands Metro** in the last year before the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Completed the **Metro extension from New Street to Centenary Square in Birmingham on time and on budget** in December 2019, **began the construction of the extension to Dudley and Brierley Hill**, started **the extension down Broad Street to Edgbaston**, which will be completed later this year, and began **the extension to Wolverhampton rail station** which will be completed later this year.
- **Secured over £200 million of Government funding for the Metro Extension to Dudley and to Brierley Hill**, and struck a deal to finance the whole of the £449 million project.
- Persuaded Government to pay the West Midlands **£160 million to build the extension from Birmingham City Centre to Digbeth**, and began construction last year.
- **Developed new clean electric trams**, which run on batteries through Birmingham City Centre to **avoid the need for overhead wires**.
- **Took the Midland Metro into public ownership so that we can reinvest any proceeds back into expanding the Metro network**.
- **Introduced Swift Go capped fare which ensures travellers get the best value fare at the end of the day**, and **introduced flexible season tickets on the Metro** for those who work three or four days per week.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- Complete the metro extension from **Centenary Square to Edgbaston** by Christmas, and the **Wednesbury to Brierley Hill** by 2024.
- Complete the **Eastside metro extension to Digbeth** by 2025, and **begin construction of the North Solihull to Digbeth expansion** through Chelmsley Wood and East Birmingham by 2024.
- **Conduct a rapid assessment of which lines in the 2040 plan should be prioritised next**, including how easy they will be to finance.
- **Develop detailed plans and business cases for the next priority lines**, for example Hagley Road and Wednesbury to Walsall, looking at which sections might need to run underground using cut-and-cover techniques.
- **Ensure Sprint routes are future proof so that they can be upgraded to Metro lines in the future** when funding becomes available.
- Make sure that the **21 new state-of-the-art trams** that we've ordered to double our existing fleet are delivered on time and within budget, and ensure jobs at the new tram depot in Wednesbury go to local people.
- **Accelerate the construction of our Metro lines**, by working with the Midland Metro Alliance to provide more resources and remove obstacles and delays.



The West Midlands Metro with local West Bromwich West MP Shaun Bailey

MAKING VERY LIGHT RAIL A REALITY IN COVENTRY AND DUDLEY

For some areas in the West Midlands, Coventry in particular, we are developing a new type of public transport system, Very Light Rail. This new system will be cheaper to build and run than conventional Metro, with a new lightweight vehicle powered by batteries.

Not only could this provide a brilliant new public transport option for residents in Coventry, but it could also **put the West Midlands at the centre of this new technology. That would mean new jobs in research and manufacturing, with the potential to export these new systems around the world.** It's an exciting opportunity for the West Midlands, and we must seize our chance.

Progress made:

- **Provided £12 million of Combined Authority funding for the Very Light Rail Programme, with a further £14 million secured from Government through the Get Building Fund.**
- **Welcomed the completion of the two kilometre test track facility in Dudley** between Castle Hill Bridge and Cinder Bank with a test passenger platform, and **began the construction of a new National Very Light Rail Innovation Centre at the old Dudley Train Station in Castle Hill.**
- **Funded the development of a prototype Very Light Rail vehicle,** which was built by engineers from Warwick Manufacturing Group, Transport Design International and NP Aerospace in Coventry, and is currently in testing at the test facilities in Dudley.
- Coventry City Council has confirmed that **the first route will be from University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire to the City Centre,** with a potential extension to Ansty Park with a new Park and Ride site.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Secure a Transport and Works Act Order, giving permission for the construction of the first Very Light Rail route, and develop the Full Business Case** for the first line in Coventry, with a plan to secure the funding from developer contributions, future fares and Government.
- **Start construction by 2024 and commit to a firm date for the opening to passengers no later than 2025.**
- Work with the West Midlands Growth Company to **bring potential investors and other city-regions from around the world to Coventry and Dudley to see the system in action** with a view to buying it from the West Midlands.



The new Very Light Rail prototype vehicle at NP Aerospace in Coventry



“ Very Light Rail is an exciting opportunity and we must seize our chance ”

The site of the new Very Light Rail Innovation Centre in Dudley, with Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley

CLEANER, SAFER, QUICKER, MORE FREQUENT BUS SERVICES

For years, buses in our region got slower, with higher fares and fewer people riding them. Yet in the last four years, by working closely with operators through the West Midlands Bus Alliance, **we have started to turn around the broken model of the past.**

By reducing fares through freezes, Low Fare Zones and our new half price scheme for young people, we have made buses more affordable. We have invested in new environmentally-friendly buses, cleaning and security to make the experience much better for bus passengers. And through our work on tackling congestion across the region, we have seen bus speeds increase for the first time since 2006. All this has come together to mean that before the pandemic more people were choosing to use the bus, with an increased number of bus journeys taken in the West Midlands, while in the rest of England ridership was still declining. **There is plenty more work to be done, but our plan is beginning to work.**

Progress made:

- **Increased the number of bus journeys by 8 million in the year before the pandemic, compared to a decrease in England overall and oversaw increased bus speeds in the West Midlands** for the first time since 2006.
- **Frozen the price of bus fares** since becoming Mayor in 2017, and **reduced ticket prices in low fare zones in Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley**, and for the local daysaver in outer Birmingham.
- **Extended the half price bus travel to all young people aged 16-18 who are in training or on an apprenticeship** with 59,000 young people taking this up in 2018/19, provided free bus tickets for the homeless and those looking for work, and protected free travel passes for older people.
- **Cracked down on anti-social behaviour on buses** by funding new special police constables, installing CCTV on all new buses, and introducing tough new bus by-laws to give officers the power to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- Secured £88 million to build and started construction of **rapid bus routes with clean hydrogen buses from the Airport into Birmingham on the A45 and along the A34 from Birmingham to Walsall** to be running in time for the Commonwealth Games, and a further £24 million to develop a rapid bus route from Dudley to Druids Heath.
- **Oversaw increases in bus ridership of 4% on Harborne Road in Birmingham and of 11% on Lode Lane in Solihull following implementation of bus prioritisation measures.**
- **Overseen introduction of better quality new Platinum buses** with free wifi, more leg room, better more comfortable seats and USB charging points, and **easy contactless payment on cards and phones with best value capping rolled out on all National Express buses.**
- **Committed to making sure that all 2,100 buses in the region are clean (Euro 6 standard), the first city-region to achieve this after London.** National Express has promised never to buy another diesel bus again for use in the West Midlands, with hydrogen buses being used on new routes, and **Coventry has been chosen as one of the first all electric bus cities in the UK**, with £50 million of new Government funding to enable operators to upgrade all the buses in Coventry.
- **Oversaw major Improvements to bus stations across the region**, including Walsall St. Paul's and Coventry Pool Meadow, and funded the regeneration of the Dudley Interchange to be ready for the arrival of the Metro to Dudley.
- **Protected the crucial Ring and Ride service when it was under threat of going bust**, and used the service during the Coronavirus pandemic to **provide over 30,000 shuttle bus journeys for NHS workers.**
- **Improved bus routes in local areas**, for example providing new routes in Solihull to Jaguar Land Rover Fen End and Blythe Valley Business Park.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Continue to improve buses in the West Midlands through our Enhanced Partnership, working with operators to keep fares reasonable, improve services and invest in new clean high-quality buses**, as long as we are seeing improved outcomes for passengers, making the most of the support in the Government's new Bus Strategy.
- **Review bus waiting areas in each of our urban centres**, and look to make them safer, more comfortable, in particular completing the Dudley Interchange, Sutton Coldfield Interchange project, and in Birmingham City Centre, for example improving the facilities around Moor Street and Dale End.
- **Look for more opportunities for prioritised rapid bus routes**, including a review of the priorities for the Sprint programme, and future-proof Sprint routes so they can be upgraded to Metro easily in the future.
- Retain our **half price bus fare for apprentices and trainees** and **protect the free bus pass for older people**, work with the bus companies to **keep the fares freeze we've seen for the last four years**, and to maintain the existing Low Fare Zones and explore new ones.
- **Expand the take-up of our schemes to support jobseekers with subsidised fares** through Workwise, and **to provide free tickets for the homeless**.
- **Improve the Ring & Ride accessibility services for people who need it**, and explore whether there is potential for **further joint work with councils on accessible transport** for those with learning difficulties or disabilities, to ensure a great service for everyone.
- **Secure funding from Government for full fare capping across all modes of transport and all operators** on Swift.
- **Seek devolved control of the Bus Service Operators Grant** to incentivise operators to work together with Transport for West Midlands on local priorities.
- **Trial 5G on buses to allow passengers to stream high-quality video on the move**, following our successful 5G pilot on the Metro.

TACKLING CRIME ON THE TRANSPORT NETWORK

For more information on what Andy has done to tackle crime on the transport network and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 9 on page 152.

REDUCING AIR POLLUTION AND CARBON EMISSIONS

For more information on what Andy has done to tackle climate change and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 5 on page 104.

“The healthiest, most environmentally-friendly ways to travel are on foot or on a bike”



Rolling out the West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme in Coventry

PUTTING CYCLING AND WALKING AT THE HEART OF OUR TRANSPORT PLANS

The healthiest, most environmentally-friendly ways to travel around the West Midlands are on foot or on a bike. We have made some good progress in the last four years, with more money committed to cycling infrastructure, new segregated cycle routes under construction, and projects to encourage people to get active. But to overcome years of underinvestment, and significant opposition to prioritising road space for cycling and walking, **we must redouble our efforts.**

Progress made:

- **Secured enough funding for cycling and walking from Government to meet our £10 per person target**, including £23 million from our Transforming Cities Fund allocation and £17 million from the Emergency Active Travel Fund, and **called on the Government to provide more funding for cycling and walking.**
- **Funded the development of new cycle routes** across the West Midlands including along the Binley Road between Coventry University and University Hospital (£5 million) and a series of interventions around the Metro Extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill (£3 million).
- **Secured a further £13 million to fund more safe cycle routes** on the A457 corridor from Birmingham to Smethwick, in Solihull from Meriden to Millisons Wood, along the Wednesfield Road in Wolverhampton, and from Foreshill to Coventry City Centre from the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund.
- **Set out plans for a 500-mile Starley cycling network**, named after the Coventry-based Starley bicycle manufacturers.
- **Funded and launched a 'Boris Bike' style West Midlands cycle hire scheme** in Sutton Coldfield, and secured commitment to roll out at least 1,500 bikes and electric bikes across all parts of the region by the end of July 2021.
- **Commissioned updated cycling infrastructure design guidance** to advise local authorities and other partners on how to ensure new cycling infrastructure is fit for purpose.
- **Improved cycle parking and road safety outside schools and nurseries in the region** through the Better Streets Community Fund, for example at Stivichall Primary School in Coventry, Thorns Primary School and Wordsley School in Dudley, Clifton Primary School in Birmingham, and Friar Park Primary School in Sandwell, and **worked with Living Streets to get 14,000 children at 55 schools involved in 'walk to school' projects**, with the number of children walking in some of those schools increasing from 47% to 83%.
- **Ran the Big Summer of Cycling and Walking campaign** to get more people trying active travel during the Coronavirus pandemic, and **piloted a 'social prescribing' scheme in the Black Country** to test the effect of offering patients cycling and walking opportunities to help with their health and wellbeing.
- **Developed a unified wayfinding signage scheme, similar to the signage used for cycle superhighways in London** and gained approval from Government to use it on streets in the West Midlands.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Work up a substantial number of detailed designs and business cases for segregated cycle routes** (at least 10 major routes in this Mayoral term) by providing scheme development funding, to overcome the challenge that there are not currently enough immediately fundable high-quality proposals coming forward from councils with the local political support to implement them.
- **Create a Executive Commissioner for cycling and walking at Transport for West Midlands**, and **set up a new Citizen's Panel to advise on all our work to increase cycling** in the region.
- **Develop a new working model with local authority cycling leads, transport and planning teams**, with more resources, more support for ambitious local authorities, and pooling of expertise across the region.
- **Review the order of prioritisation of the Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan**, and **seek agreement to a new Combined Authority funding policy for cycling infrastructure**, with local authorities offered funding by the Combined Authority on the basis of how ambitious their scheme is based on level of segregation and quality of infrastructure, rather than sharing money amongst all areas regardless of the quality of the scheme.
- **Sustain £10 per head per year of Government funding to building high-quality cycling infrastructure in the West Midlands**, calling for additional investment from the Government's £2 billion Gear Change Active Travel Fund.
- **Turn the Starley Network into continuous, safe 'Cycle Superhighways' across the region**, introduce uniform West Midlands Cycle wayfinding signage, and **work with councils to make city and town centres 'cycle friendly'** with easy connections, for example within Birmingham City Centre.
- **Launch an intensive new programme to reduce the number of car journeys for school drop-offs and pick-ups by providing better alternatives**, including expanding the successful Living Streets walking programme, expanding the Better Streets Community Fund to make sure that every primary and secondary school in the West Midlands has adequate cycle parking.
- Review cycle parking at every station on the West Midlands rail and Metro network, explore the development of a **multistorey cycle car parks at Curzon Street station and Interchange**, similar to those in Utrecht and Cambridge, and **work with all Combined Authority-funded developers to make sure new housing developments have cycle parking and are low traffic areas by design**, and commercial developments also look to ensure sufficient cycle parking.
- **Agree an investment programme of canalside towpath restoration and access ramps with the Canal and River Trust** to make walking and cycling easier along these routes.
- **Support the campaign to build a West Midlands velodrome** after the Commonwealth Games by developing a business case and seeking funding.



The Electric Bike Shop on the Birmingham Road in Sutton Coldfield

BUSTING CONGESTION ACROSS THE WEST MIDLANDS

Congestion has been a longstanding problem in the West Midlands, and for decades traffic has got worse and worse in the region. People have been using their cars because the public transport simply wasn't good enough. **However, in the last four years, we have started to see signs of progress, with our efforts to manage congestion better through the region's new Transport Co-ordination Centre, and improvements to public transport.**

The signs were positive that we were improving congestion before the Coronavirus pandemic, but as the region recovers, we need to make sure that we don't just fall back into our old ways. That will take permanent changes in behaviour towards public transport, and excellent traffic management, particularly of the key routes around the region.

Progress made:

- **Oversaw increased bus speeds in the West Midlands** for the first time since 2006, even before the pandemic.
- **Won funding to create a new £22 million Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre which oversees transport operations in the region**, and takes action to combat delays and traffic disruption.
- **Developed a rigorous congestion management plan, with Key Route Managers responsible for keeping traffic flowing** on major roads and coming up with improvements that could be made.
- Improved customer communications from the Co-ordination Centre so there is a **single trusted source of information on transport in the region**.
- Introduced a regional roadworks permit scheme to allow Transport for West Midlands to **co-ordinate roadworks and fine utilities or construction companies who take too long**.
- **Pushed M6 Toll successfully to introduce new fares and charging schemes for freight companies to encourage heavy goods vehicles to use the M6 Toll** instead of the M6.
- **Won investment from Highways England to fix notorious traffic black spots in the region**, for example the A46 in Coventry, Birchley Island, M42 Junction 6 and M6 Junction 10.
- **Piloted 5G sensor technology on roads in the West Midlands**, which can be used in future to control traffic lights and speed up the flow of traffic.
- Developed a 10-year delivery plan to improve the Key Route Network.
- **Agreed the Regional Road Safety Strategy**, and worked with councils, West Midlands Fire Service and West Midlands Police on education, road engineering, enforcement, and safer vehicles.
- **Called for additional support for local residents and drivers, in particular taxis and private hire, to upgrade their vehicles** ahead of the implementation of the Clean Air Zone by Birmingham City Council.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Rule out any universal congestion charge on drivers** in the West Midlands, but continue to work to **encourage drivers to switch to walking, cycling or public transport**.
- **Use the Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre to ensure that traffic keeps flowing during the Commonwealth Games and other major events**, and during periods of intensive construction work, for example for High Speed 2.
- **Strengthen congestion management team and technology at the Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre, and review traffic management roles and responsibilities on the Key Route Network**, including comparing us to other world-class city regions.
- **Complete work on traffic blackspots such as A46 in Coventry, Birchley Island, M42 Junction 6 and M6 Junction 10**, and seek the devolution of Highways England budget for future congestion busting projects.
- **Refresh the Regional Road Safety Strategy to set a more ambitious Vision Zero target**, continuing our work to improve infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians, encouraging people to switch to public transport, and reviewing the safety of logistics vehicles in the region.

- **Consider a lane charging scheme to incentivise utilities and construction companies to finish their works as swiftly as possible.**
- **Secure powers to fine inconsiderate drivers causing congestion through Moving Traffic Offences, such as waiting on yellow box junctions** in the region, and use any funds generated to invest in improving public transport in the region.
- **Update the West Midlands freight strategy**, looking in particular at last-mile van deliveries from online shopping, logistics requirements of our major manufacturing businesses, the logistics sector itself as a major employment sector, and the need to reduce congestion and decarbonise freight operations.
- **Explore whether more traffic officers can support congestion co-ordination operations**, for example in city centres on Christmas weekends and on match days, or if not, whether other staff could be trained and certified in a similar way to the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.

BUILD MORE PARK & RIDE TO GET MORE DRIVERS ONTO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

However much we do to encourage public transport, cycling and walking in the West Midlands, there will always be some people who have no choice but to drive part of their journey. To get those travellers out of their cars and onto public transport, there needs to be somewhere convenient to park. **That is the reason the car parks at stations and Metro stations are so important to our overall transport plan.**

Our Park & Ride sites in the West Midlands have developed over the years, with Transport for West Midlands operating 9,000 parking spaces at 65 car parks serving 39 rail stations and five Metro stops. These car parks are in different places and different sizes, but **the one thing they all have in common is that prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, they were all full on a weekday by 8am.** Therefore, alongside doing all we can to persuade people to get to the station by walking, cycling and scootering, we also need to increase drastically the capacity of Park & Ride in the region if we are to have any hope of getting drivers to switch to public transport on their commutes.

Progress made:

- **Completed construction of a new 620 space Park & Ride multi-storey car park at Longbridge station**, which is self-funding through future car parking charges, and a free **196 space park and ride at Bradley Lane Metro stop**
- **Trialled a Save a Space app which allowed drivers to pay to reserve a space** at Four Oaks, Whitlocks End, Stourbridge Junction, Rowley Regis, Northfield and Tile Hill.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Get top priority park and rides designed, funded and built**, including adding 250 spaces to Tile Hill rail station in Coventry and extending parking at Whitlocks End rail station in Solihull.
- **Develop plans for further park and ride sites by identifying sites and completing business cases**, for example, around Minworth and close to Junction 7 of the M6 on the A34.
- **Fund this expansion of new park and ride sites using contributions from the public sector combined with reasonable and proportionate charging** for their use, taking care not to disincentivise public transport by over-charging for parking, and not to displace parked cars onto local residential roads.
- **Continue to do everything possible to encourage local residents who only need to travel a short distance to a rail station or Metro stop to walk or cycle**, including improving cycling infrastructure and secure storage at Park and Ride sites.

TESTING NEW APPROACHES TO TRANSPORT IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

From bicycles, to four by four off-roaders, to autonomous vehicles, the West Midlands has always been at the cutting edge of new transport technologies. The transport and logistics sector are huge employers, and are a big business opportunity for the region in the future. What's more, **residents in the West Midlands will be some of the first to benefit from some of these new technologies.**

The West Midlands was selected as the UK's first 'Future of Transport Zone', bringing in £22 million for our transport technology team to trial new technologies across the region. **Whether it is e-scooters, cycle hire, bus on-demand, drones or driverless cars, we are committed to remaining at the cutting-edge of transport technology.**

TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS	
12,000 businesses in the West Midlands	Example employers: DPD, National Express, West Midlands Trains, Voi! technology
Worth £4.9 billion every year, growing 5% from 2016-2018	Jobs impact of COVID-19: 13,600 people furloughed

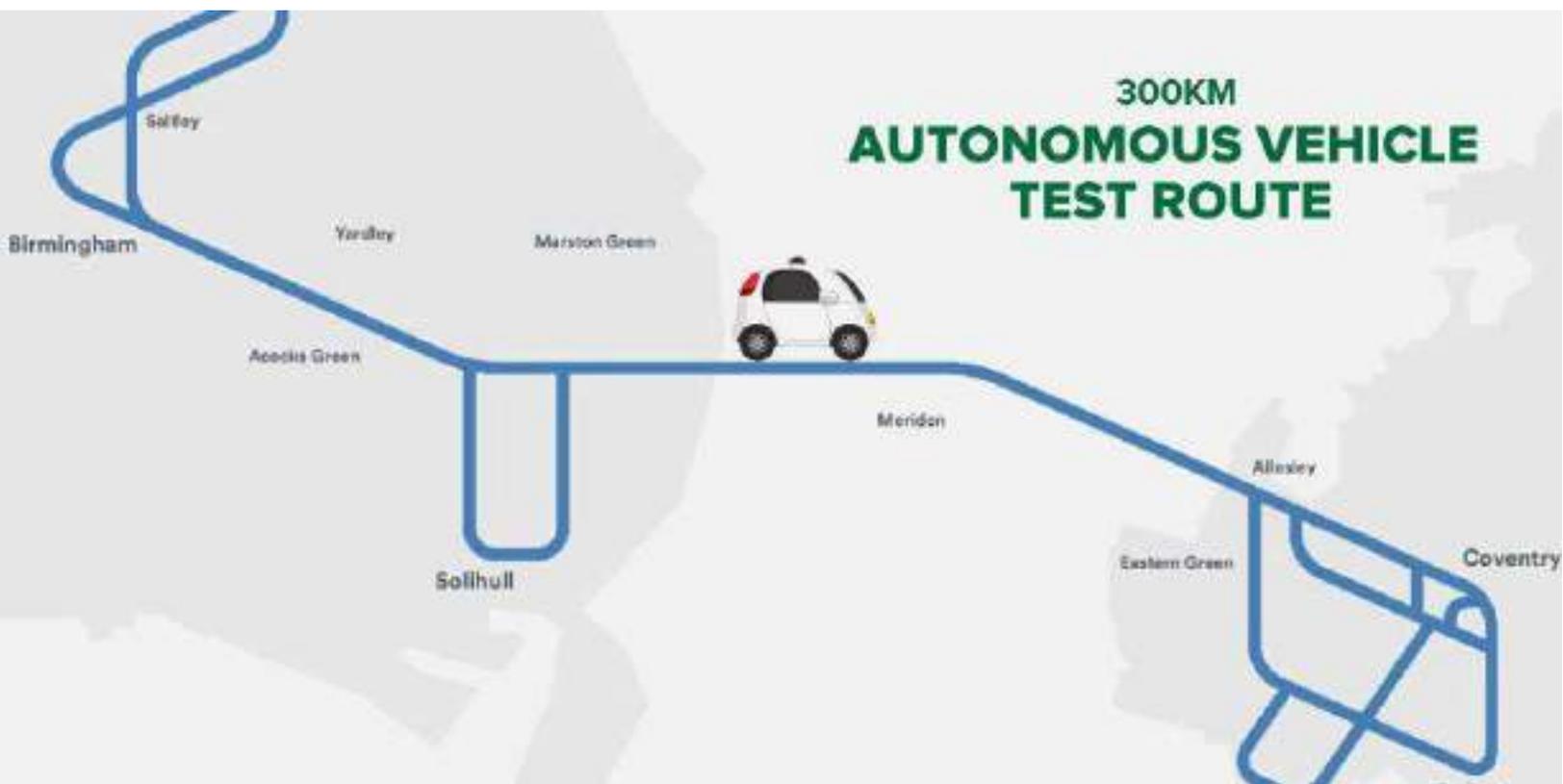
Progress made:

- **Launched a 12-month trial of e-scooters** in Birmingham, Coventry and West Bromwich, with Walsall, Solihull, Dudley and Wolverhampton to follow, with over 80,000 journeys across Birmingham alone.
- **Launched the West Midlands 'Boris-bike'-style cycle hire scheme in Sutton Coldfield and Wolverhampton**, rolling out to all parts of the West Midlands in the next year, with bikes, docking stations and locks all manufactured in the West Midlands.
- **Created a new Bus On-Demand service, which allows passengers to hail a bus using an Uber-style app to wherever they are**, trialling this new service in south Coventry, and trialled mobility credits in Coventry, where residents give up their cars in return for £3,000 credit **for public transport travel** in the West Midlands.
- **Tested autonomous vehicles on roads in the West Midlands**, such as in Coventry city centre, at the University of Warwick campus, on the HORIBA-Mira test track in Nuneaton and on A-roads in Birmingham and Solihull, with £31 million of funding from Government to become the UK's home of autonomous vehicle testing.
- **Ran a set of trials of the uses of 5G technologies in transport** including the UK's first 5G connected tram, parking, and connecting traffic lights and sensors using 5G to reduce congestion.
- **Improved the Swift card, bringing in new technology, such as the ability to cap your total daily fare across all National Express buses and the ability to pay in-app**, as well as introducing vending machines for Swift cards in West Midlands stations.
- **Improved the Transport for West Midlands Data Portal making new open data sets available for the public and developers**, such as our live bus location data and real journey time API tool, and **worked with Jaguar Land Rover, Bosch and Warwick Manufacturing Group on the ConVEx project to develop a data platform to share mobility data, including autonomous vehicle test data.**

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Become the home of driverless vehicle testing in the UK**, building on our existing testbeds and attracting car and technology companies to the region to test their new products and services.
- **Complete the rollout of eScooters and cycle hire scheme to all areas** of the West Midlands.
- **Explore whether the bus on demand service could be used to provide better services for rural areas of the West Midlands**, such as the villages in Meriden, and potentially be used to develop new school bus services.

- **Roll out 5G connectivity and sensors on road junctions** across the West Midlands to allow autonomous vehicles to move around safely.
- **Support Coventry's experimental Urban Air Hub which will test electric air taxis and cargo drones which take off vertically** as part of the Government's Future Flight Challenge.
- As part of the Department for Transport new headquarters in Birmingham, **push for the teams responsible for electric vehicles and autonomous vehicles to be based here** (the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles and Centre for Autonomous and Connected Vehicles).
- **Explore which other transport data sets could be made available to developers**, to allow them to create innovative new businesses in the West Midlands, in particular seeing whether sensor data from our new 5G traffic sensor network could be made public.
- **Seek to secure the funding to allow the full capping of fares across all operators and all modes of transport**, so that if you use an eScooter, then a bus, then the train, in the West Midlands your total fare will still be capped at a daily maximum.



GIVING EVERYONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN THE SKILLS THEY NEED TO GET ON IN LIFE

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
"Make sure our young people get the skills they need"	Over 50% of working age people in the West Midlands are now qualified to Level 3 and above for the first time. The proportion of people with no qualifications was at an all time low before the pandemic.	✓
"Secure further funding for apprenticeships"	Secured £69 million Skills Deal , including over £21 million already pledged by employers through our unique Apprenticeship Levy Transfer fund and secured the full devolution of the £130 million annual adult education budget.	✓
"Focus the adult skills budget on courses to develop twenty-first century skills"	Increased the proportion of higher-level apprenticeships, and focused on the growing sectors like digital, advanced manufacturing and construction.	✓
"Launch a Mayor's Mentors scheme"	10,697 young people have been mentored through the Mayor's Mentors scheme since 2017 - making it the biggest scheme of its kind in the country.	✓
"Support those who find it difficult to get into work"	Launched special training schemes to help people in all communities in the West Midlands get into good jobs , particularly focused on overcoming barriers such as disabilities or lack of qualifications.	✓
"Set up a system to support people throughout their whole career"	Secured over £11.5 million funding for retraining schemes in Construction and in Digital in the West Midlands, which will train over 5,000 people, and provided skills training for people over 19 through our £130 million adult education budget.	✓

KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Get people back into training and work after the pandemic	Retrain or find work for over 100,000 people in the next two years through my Jobs Plan for the West Midlands, making the most of big regional opportunities like City of Culture, the Commonwealth Games and High Speed 2 and new jobs in the high growth sectors .	
Take an intensive “Swap Don’t Drop” approach to helping young people train through pandemic	Take an intensive “Swap Don’t Drop” approach to making sure that young people at risk of unemployment do not drop out of education and training by falling through the gaps.	
Scale up our “Beat the Bots” digital retraining skills programmes	Scale up the West Midlands “Beat the Bots” fund to provide more training in fields like coding, UX/UI, cybersecurity and product management, and work with tech sector businesses to keep more talent in the region.	
Be the region that cracks world-class technical education	Work with schools and colleges to make sure that the launch of the new technical T-Levels is successful in the West Midlands, increase the number of apprenticeships in our priority industry sectors , and seek the full devolution of all 16-18 further education funding to the West Midlands , so that it can be aligned with West Midlands priorities and with 18+ adult education funding.	
Take control of careers advice in the region, and link it up with local jobs	Seek the full devolution of Government careers funding to the Combined Authority and establish a West Midlands Careers Service, set up a new online work experience platform for young people, so that everyone can apply for internships and work experience opportunities , not just those with existing knowledge or connections, and develop the Mayor’s Mentors scheme even further .	
Create the most flexible skills system anywhere in Britain to make sure everyone can gain the skills they need	Work with colleges and training providers to make teaching hours more flexible for those with other jobs , for example by running night school evening classes or providing more teaching online , and explore the challenges faced by people who lose their jobs later in their careers , and develop retraining schemes and support specifically for over 50s.	

GET PEOPLE INTO WORK WITH NEW SKILLS AFTER CORONAVIRUS

The pandemic has been hugely challenging for people who have been **furloughed or lost their jobs, and also for young people who are trying to get into the job market for the first time**. All of the progress that we had been making on jobs and skills in the West Midlands has been interrupted, and it will be a challenging time ahead of us to repair the damage.

That's why we have come together as a region to work on a fast response to these immediate challenges. We have already made more training opportunities available, and are planning more help in the next few months. **We must do everything we can to help people back into work, with the skills they need to succeed and rebuild their careers.**

Progress so far:

- **Made free training courses for up to six weeks available at twenty West Midlands colleges for up to 5,000 people a year**, through the Reignite Your Future sector-based work academy scheme, and **provided more places on free coding bootcamps like School of Code**, through £1.5 million additional funding from Government.
- **Supported the quick rollout of the Kickstart scheme**, which gives young people a 6-month paid job which is fully funded by the Government, with 7,000 vacancies available so far in the West Midlands.
- **Worked with job centres to recruit 350 more Work Coaches** to help people find a new job and to support them while they do, and **ran a series of online Careers Festivals and Jobs Webinars for young people** during the pandemic explaining what jobs and training opportunities are available.
- **Set up the online youth platform where young people in the West Midlands can find all of the help that is available for them to get a job**, and set up four youth hubs across the region, including The Way Youth Zone in Wolverhampton and Sandwell College, with eleven others planned, and **launched free online training courses with Coursera** to support those who want to retrain or learn new skills.

Plan for the next two years:

- **Retrain or find work for over 100,000 people in the next two years** through my Jobs Plan for the West Midlands, making the most of **big regional opportunities** like City of Culture, the Commonwealth Games and High Speed 2 and new jobs in the **high growth sectors** like green businesses, advanced manufacturing, professional services, creative and digital.
- **Take an intensive "Swap Don't Drop" approach to making sure that students do not drop out of education and training by falling through the gaps, building on the existing work**, by developing protocols and data-sharing arrangements between institutions and public-sector bodies.
- **Make the most of the Government's £2.5 billion investment in the National Skills Fund**, including free level 3 qualifications for adults and skills bootmaps in coding, data analytics, welding engineering and construction.
- **Help 20,000 young people take up the Government's Kickstart scheme**, and make it easier for a young person on the Kickstart scheme to convert their placement into a longer-term paid apprenticeship.
- Make the most of Government incentives to businesses of £3,000 for each new apprentice, and work with employers to **massively increase the number of apprenticeships following the pandemic**.
- **Seek further funding for Sector Based Work Academies so that we can help at least 10,000 unemployed young people back to work quickly.**



“ We must do everything we can to help people into work quickly, especially those getting their very first job ”

Meeting a young person on the Government's Kickstart scheme in Solihull

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR BIG REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO TRAIN LOCAL PEOPLE

HIGH SPEED 2

COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE 2021

BIRMINGHAM COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2022

Progress so far:

- **Over 150 apprenticeships so far** in the West Midlands.
- **12,000 jobs already created by HS2**, many in construction and engineering.
- **National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure** set up to train young people.

- **Construction training hub for City of Culture** created in Coventry with Eurovia Contracting.
- **Construction jobs and apprenticeship opportunities** on Coventry Rail Station, public realm and venue restoration works, funded by the WMCA.

- **Construction training hub created in Perry Barr** to support the stadium, infrastructure and housing construction.
- WMCA appointed as responsible for the **Commonwealth Games Jobs and Skills Academy**.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **5,000 apprenticeships expected** by the time HS2 is completed.
- **7,000 new skilled workers required** by Balfour Beatty VINCI and its supply chain in the next two years alone.

- **Train over 700 people, focusing on the creative, digital and tourism** sectors with Coventry training provider PET-Xi.
- **Over 1,000 jobs to be created**

- **Support 6,600 people into training and jobs through the Jobs and Skills Academy**, run by the WMCA.
- **Give Games staff and volunteers** the opportunity to earn formal qualifications.
- Apprenticeship programmes focused on **events management, sports management and digital marketing**.

BRINGING RIGOUR TO TECHNICAL SKILLS TRAINING SO YOUNG PEOPLE ARE READY FOR JOBS

Employers in the region have for many years felt that the skills that they need in their businesses are often not provided for, and many young people do not have basic workplace skills when they start their careers. **We have focused in the last four years on improving the quality of technical education, and working with companies to make sure that training is relevant to the jobs available.**

That has meant securing control of the region's adult education budget from Government, and then **working closely with West Midlands employers to make sure that courses we fund are rigorous and relevant.** We also brought in more funding for apprenticeships through our Skills Deal with Government for digital bootcamps, construction training, and letting our large employers choose to keep their apprenticeship levy funding in the region.

Progress made:

- **Secured the devolution of the adult education budget of £130 million per year,** and the Skills Deal with Government, which is set to bring in an additional £69 million for skills training - the only region in the country to achieve this.
- **Rationalised the number of different courses funded using the adult education budget, and prioritised courses in the sectors which the region specialises in,** such as manufacturing, automotive, creative and digital, based on the West Midlands Industrial Strategy.
- **Supported an extra 1,840 apprentices in 613 businesses through our Levy Transfer Fund,** which has had over £21 million pledged by large businesses across the region, and **increased the overall proportion of more skilled Level 3, 4 and 5 apprenticeships** in the region.
- **Supported the successful regional bids for over £25 million for two new Institutes of Technology in Dudley and Solihull,** provided further Combined Authority funding for the Dudley Institute of Technology.
- **Worked with businesses to understand the skills they will need in the future,** for example, created an Automotive Skills Plan with a focus on the new skills needed for electric vehicles and battery technology.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Seek the full devolution of all 16-18 further education funding to the West Midlands,** so that it can be aligned with West Midlands priorities and with 18+ adult education funding, and **lobby for the West Midlands share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for skills training for disadvantaged people** to be devolved to the region.
- **Explore developing a UCAS-style application system for technical skills courses in the West Midlands, and find other ways to simplify the skills funding system,** making it easier for young people, employers and providers to understand how it works, and clarify the roles of the LEPs, WMCA and councils.
- Work with schools and colleges to **make sure that the launch of the new technical T-Levels is successful** in the West Midlands, starting at Walsall and Dudley Colleges and rolling out to schools and colleges across the region, and look at whether the work placement requirement could be more flexible, for example part-time over a longer period.
- **Continue our important long-term work to improve the quality of the technical skills training in the region,** alongside the urgent work to get young people into training and work after Coronavirus.
- **Find ways to make apprenticeships even more effective in developing young people's skills, such as making the first few weeks of training in an apprenticeship more intensive** so that young people are better prepared for when they start their on-the-job training, and make the case to Government to **provide further wage subsidy to help small and**

medium sized businesses create more apprenticeships in particular for young people aged 16-18.

- **Give more impartial advice to employers** about which apprenticeships and other skills courses there are, and which providers might best suit their needs, potentially through trusted independent organisations like the Chambers of Commerce, and **make it easier for employers to take on new apprentices by simplifying the paperwork required.**
- **Seek greater flexibility from Government in how employers can use their Apprenticeship Levy funding**, to allow them to use it on other high-quality training, then **encourage large employers to invest in more vocational training**, and make sure that workers on agency or temporary contracts are not missing out on opportunities to develop their skills.
- **Secure further funding for new facilities, equipment and buildings for colleges in the West Midlands**, for example for Wolverhampton College in the City Learning Quarter.



“ We are making sure the courses we fund are rigorous and relevant to the jobs available in the West Midlands ”

SUPPORT OUR WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITIES

We are fortunate to have eight brilliant universities in the West Midlands each with their own specialisms and strengths. These universities educate around 155,000 students at any one time and prepare them for their careers, but they also contribute £4 billion per year to the regional economy from student spending alone, and are hugely important employers in the region.

Researchers from our universities work with companies to develop new products, universities employ thousands of people, with many more jobs supplying services to them, and international students bring in cash to the region. **That’s why our universities are critical to the region’s success, and why the Mayor must lead efforts to support them.**

EDUCATION & PUBLIC SECTOR	
2,700 businesses and organisations in the West Midlands	Example employers: University of Birmingham, Coventry City Council, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government in Wolverhampton
Worth £10.8 billion every year, growing 7% from 2016-2018	Jobs impact of COVID-19: Relatively few people furloughed

Progress made:

- **Supported our universities in their successful funding bids for major projects**, including £15 million for the National Brownfield Institute in Wolverhampton, £271 million Warwick Manufacturing Group, the Manufacturing Technology Centre and the Energy Systems Catapult, £11 million for the Life Sciences Park at Birmingham University, funding for Energy Research Accelerator programmes at Aston and Warwick, and funding for STEAMhouse at Birmingham City University.
- **Improved the transport links to our universities**, for example invested £50 million in Wolverhampton Station, £39 million in Coventry Station, £56 million in University Station in Birmingham, and rolled out pilots of scooters and on-demand bus services at Warwick University’s campus.
- **Harnessed the expertise of our universities to help the Combined Authority with policy-making** in the region, in particular through WM-REDI.
- Worked with universities to **campaign successfully for the exclusion of international students from any migration targets**, and ensure higher education priorities were met in the Brexit Deal, **making sure that limits were not reimposed on the number of international students, and that the UK could participate in Horizon Europe research programmes in the future.**

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Support our universities in their funding bids for major projects**, particular in those areas which support the West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy, such as the National Centre for the Decarbonisation of Heat and the Speed to Scale Region proposals.
- **Continue to partner with universities to learn from their experts in all of the priorities of the Combined Authority**, such as Housing, Skills, Transport and reaching Net Zero, making the most of the world-class expertise we have in the region.
- Work with universities to understand how the West Midlands can **secure a greater share of the national public sector research and development spend**, by continuing to champion university projects, and by **developing new partnerships through the West Midlands Combined Authority Innovation Board**.
- **Improve joint working between universities and colleges**, breaking down the divide between higher education and further education, for example by agreeing mutual recognition of course modules and through joint delivery of courses.
- Ensure the new scheme to replace the Erasmus student exchange programme, **the Turing Scheme, allows West Midlands students to study overseas, and allows international students to study in the West Midlands**.



Springfield Campus of the University of Wolverhampton with local MP Jane Stevenson

GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE HIGH-QUALITY ADVICE ON THEIR CAREERS

Careers advice is a vital part of any young person's experience in helping them decide what they want to do with their life. All too often, careers advice is not good enough, because there is not enough time to spend with young people individually, or because the people responsible just don't know enough about the careers available today.

When I became Mayor I knew that we needed to do something about careers advice to help our young people get into well-paid fulfilling jobs, but this area has been a challenge. We have had to rely on the efforts of brilliant West Midlands volunteers through my Mayor's Mentors scheme because none of the Government funding to make careers advice better is controlled by the Mayor, and most of it is still controlled in London. **To make more progress we need to bring control of careers advice back to the region, because it is people here in the West Midlands who really understand the jobs and career paths in the region.**

Progress made:

- **Ran a series of jobs and training fairs in community locations** such as at the Legacy Centre of Excellence in Newtown, Maitland Hall in Washwood Heath, Brier Fair in Brierley Hill, SHAPE Youth Festival in Sandwell, and the Whitehall Centre in Caldmore, and **through our #WMStrong campaign, worked with youth outreach workers from First Class Legacy to put on careers training and other activities for young people.**
- **Worked with the National Careers Service and the Careers and Enterprise Company** to provide careers advice in the Black Country, Birmingham and Coventry & Warwickshire.
- **Set up the Mayor's Mentors scheme, through which 10,697 young people have been mentored by adult volunteers since 2017**, making it the biggest scheme of its kind in the country.
- **Supported industry-specific initiatives, like Birmingham Professional Services Week, which work to get young people into the workplace**, so that they can see for themselves what jobs in the sector look like.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Seek the full devolution of Government careers funding to the Combined Authority and establish a West Midlands Careers Service**, so that we can work directly with schools, colleges and employers and provide effective and locally relevant careers advice to young people.
- **Set up a new online work experience platform for young people, so that everyone can apply for internships and work experience opportunities**, not just those with existing knowledge or connections.
- **Develop the Mayor's Mentors scheme even further**, in particular using online video conferencing to make it even easier for adults to mentor young people, and look at whether there are certain local areas or communities who need more support to take part.
- **Continue our programme of in-person and online job fairs and careers advice sessions in community locations** throughout the West Midlands.
- **Build on the work done by the Careers and Enterprise Company with schools and work to increase the involvement of employers in careers advice**, and to widen the venues for careers advice to online and community settings.

GIVE PEOPLE LIFELONG OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

Advances in technology and the impact of the pandemic mean that **it is more important than ever that everyone has the opportunity to retrain and learn new skills later in life as their career develops**. Whether it is someone who has been laid off by their company, or someone who needs to learn new digital skills to progress, or perhaps someone who has taken some years out from working to start a family, in the past there were not enough options for these people to retrain.

We have taken an ambitious new approach, **trying new types of training like coding and cyber-security bootcamps, and providing other training like our Construction Gateway programme to participants for free**. But this is just the start. We know there is so much more that can be done to train people throughout their lives, by providing affordable, flexible training in the skills that employers want.

Progress made:

- **Secured over £11.5 million funding for new retraining schemes in Construction and in Digital** in the West Midlands which will train over 5,000 people, through the Government's National Retraining Scheme.
- **Funded training opportunities for people over 19 from the £130 million adult education budget**, such as courses for those made redundant, those returning to the workplace after a break, or those who never gained qualifications as a young person.
- **Agreed a new regional approach to teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)** with colleges and providers in the region, committed £12 million of the adult education budget to teaching English, and made courses free to those on low incomes.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- Lobby Government to **extend the National Retraining Scheme to other sectors such as manufacturing, FinTech, healthcare, green technologies**, and scale up successful pilots like School of Code, and **seek the devolution of the National Retraining Scheme funding** to the region, so that we can tailor it to our unique needs.
- Work with colleges and training providers to **make teaching hours more flexible for those with other jobs**, for example by **running night school evening classes or providing more teaching online**.
- **Explore the challenges faced by people who lose their jobs later in their careers**, and develop retraining schemes and support specifically for over 50s.
- **Develop and source the funding for more leadership and management training to help our small and medium sized businesses become more productive**, working with the business schools in the region, and making the most of the Government's Help to Grow scheme.



“ It is more important than ever that everyone has the opportunity to retrain and learn new skills as their career develops ”

SUPPORT ANYONE WHO NEEDS EXTRA HELP TO GAIN NEW SKILLS

There are some groups who need extra help to get into work, or even to access skills training in the West Midlands, and we have a responsibility to support them throughout their lives. That's why we have worked with different groups in different local areas in detail to work out how we can create something that is exactly what they need.

With the challenge of Coronavirus, we need to keep taking this forensic approach to making sure that everyone in the West Midlands has the opportunities to learn. **In particular, simplifying the skills system, and communicating well with those who need skills, to help them navigate the system is a big priority for the next three years.**

Progress made:

- **Ran the £4.7 million Connecting Communities employment support programme** which focused on helping people in some of the toughest neighbourhoods in the West Midlands to get into work with extra advice and coaching.
- **Focused our digital retraining programme on groups who are under-represented in the tech sector:** supporting 50 care leavers in learning AI, coding and cyber through Spectra, funding Caudwell Children to train 60 young people with autism in cloud infrastructure and cyber, Code your Future training 300 adults in low-paid jobs in coding, focussing on the refugee community, Niyo running a mobile app development course for black women.
- **Created targeted skills training options specifically for women,** including new digital coding courses such as the Women in Software Academy, Construction Hubs training schemes which aim for 45% of participants to be from under-represented groups such as women and ethnic minorities, and the Connecting Communities programme which helps low-paid part-time workers to increase their hours and earnings.
- **Reduced bus and Metro fares to half price for 16-18-year-old apprentices and young people in education,** helping around 60,000 young people across the region, and protected our Workwise scheme which provides free travel for those who are unemployed and trying to find work.
- **Dedicated around £11 million per year funding from the Adult Education Budget to provide English language teaching to those who need it,** and commissioned a review on English as a Second Language teaching in the region to make sure it is high quality and reaching those who need it most.
- **Helped over 600 people with health and mental health conditions back into work through our Thrive into Work programme,** secured £3 million funding to help another 1,000 people, and **provided a specialised route into employment for homeless people through the Construction Gateway** scheme.
- **Created a scheme specifically for veterans to train as tutors in construction called "Joining Forces in Construction",** to provide employment for veterans and good role models for young people.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Launch a West Midlands Life Chances Commission**, to understand how young people in the different parts of the West Midlands compare to their peers across the country, looking in detail at the evidence, from birth to age thirty, looking in particular at the effects of pre-school development, schools performance, college and university education, and other cultural and social factors.
- **Take an intensive “Swap Don’t Drop” approach to making sure that students do not drop out of education and training by falling through the gaps, building on the existing work**, by developing protocols and data-sharing arrangements between institutions and public-sector bodies.
- **Create more flexible training options for women, particular those returning to the job market after having children**, such as Night School with flexible timings, part-time options, start dates throughout the year and travel and childcare support.
- **Run specific careers schemes to encourage young women into STEM careers and automotive** in particular, working with engineering and car companies in the region.
- Develop more **targeted skills training options for BME young people**, particularly in digital, creative, professional services and entrepreneurship, and **set up a new work experience initiative** to make sure the placements are available to people from all communities in the region, not just those with family connections, **working with the new Equalities Taskforce**.
- **Strengthen the pre-apprenticeship and traineeship courses in the region to make sure that people then have the skills to progress onto a higher level of training on completion of their course**, and ultimately leading to a good job in a sector where there will be jobs for the long-term.
- **Improve the Combined Authority’s direct communication with young people, using social media, influencers and trusted brands using the #WMStrong brand**, and working together with colleges and providers to make the choices simple and easy to understand.

ENSURING EVERYONE HAS HIGH-QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
"We will have built 25,000 new homes in the West Midlands"	48,098 new homes built in the region in the three years 2017-2020 , nearly double the 25,000 target set in 2017.	
"Make sure we have a proper plan"	Agreed a regional plan to build at least 215,000 homes by 2031 with all West Midlands councils and the Government.	
"Build brownfield first to protect the Green Belt"	New homes have been completed on brownfield sites that have been derelict for years like Icknield Port Loop in Birmingham and Steelhouse Lane in Wolverhampton. Construction has started on many more sites like Friar Park in Sandwell and the former Caparo Steelworks site in Walsall.	
"Win our fair share of Government funds"	Secured a huge £458 million fund from Government to finance cleaning up derelict ex-industrial brownfield sites , in addition to spending our existing funding on preparing new homes and business premises.	
"Build more homes more quickly"	Increased the overall number of homes being built for local people - 16,527 in the most recent yearly figures - double the number of just six years ago.	
"Train a new Mayor's Army of skilled construction workers"	Provided thousands of training opportunities on the "Construction Gateway" scheme to train local people in construction to access jobs in the industry.	
"Help you afford your own home"	Saw an increase in the number of affordable home starts in the region from 2,689 in 2015/16 to 5,643 in 2019/20. Agreed a deal with five of the largest housing associations in the West Midlands to build thousands of new affordable homes and created the innovative new Help to Own scheme, which allows renters to convert their rent into mortgage payments without a hefty deposit, and own their home after 25 years.	

KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Take a Brownfield First approach to housebuilding backed by my Green Belt Pledge

Fight green belt development by working with councils to provide viable alternative brownfield sites using our £458 million housing fund, and continue a policy of 'Brownfield First' housing development. **Call on the Government to review the National Planning Policy Framework to make sure the rules better protect the green belt.**



Build thousands more truly affordable homes in the West Midlands

Build thousands of new homes for social rent, through our West Midlands Affordable Housing Collaborative Development Vehicle with local housing associations, and secure an **Affordable Housing Deal with Government, from the West Midlands' share of the Government's £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme**



Make our homes green and reduce energy bills through a massive retrofit programme

Work with developers who are committed to high-quality environmentally conscious design, and build new Zero Carbon homes in the region. **Launch a massive regional programme to improve the energy efficiency of homes** with the installation of smart meters and thermostats, wall and loft insulation, double glazing, heat pumps and hydrogen-ready boilers.



Protect the feel of our local areas and restore our region's heritage buildings

Restore a number of heritage buildings such as **the former Royalty Cinema in Harborne, the historic Erdington Baths, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall and Soho Foundry in Sandwell**, and **support the development of highly capable Local Heritage Trusts to restore historic buildings**, following the model of the Historic Coventry Trust.



PROTECT OUR PRECIOUS GREEN BELT

The Green Belt was set up to protect the countryside from the expansion of our towns and cities. **Now more than ever, we need to preserve our precious green spaces for residents to enjoy, and contribute to our efforts to fight climate change.**

Yet there are dozens of sites across the region where developers are seeking to build on the Green Belt against the wishes of local residents. In some cases this threat is compounded by local politicians who are not making every effort to protect the Green Belt. **I will continue to do everything I can as Mayor to fight to protect our Green Belt in the West Midlands.**

Progress made:

- **Taken a Brownfield First policy, spending hundreds of millions cleaning up brownfield sites** for homes and businesses, to relieve pressure on the Green Belt.
- **Campaigned alongside local communities to protect their green spaces** across the West Midlands, including at Seven Cornfields between Wolverhampton and Dudley, and in western Coventry
- **Supported proposals to enhance the protection of the Green Belt** in the Government's planning reform consultation, and **campaigned successfully against the proposed formula which would have allocated more homes to Green Belt sites** in the West Midlands.
- **Raised issues like the inaccurate population projections in Coventry with Ministers and with the Office for National Statistics, and challenged Coventry City Council to review its Local Plan** in order to reduce the number of homes to be built unnecessarily on the Green Belt.
- **Worked with Solihull Council to revise its Local Plan to save Green Belt sites such as "Site 13" in Shirley from development, by increasing the number of homes built in town centres and urban areas**, like near the HS2 station and in Solihull town centre.
- **Campaigned for there to be no repeat of the Green Belt incursions by Birmingham City Council in Sutton Coldfield at Peddimore and Langley.**
- **Committed funding to clean up brownfield sites for housing all over the Black Country to ensure that all new homes can be built on brownfield land** until at least 2031.



“

We need to preserve
our precious green
spaces for residents to
enjoy

”

Plan for 2021-2024:

ANDY'S GREEN BELT PLEDGE

1. **Fight green belt development by working with councils to provide viable alternative brownfield sites.**
2. **Push the Government for further funding** to clean up derelict and contaminated sites across the West Midlands.
3. **Continue a policy of 'Brownfield First' housing development** and block the use of any West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) funds for unacceptable green belt development.
4. **Create a team of 'urban density' specialists to help councils and developers** increase the number of homes they can build on brownfield sites and in town centres.
5. **Call on Government to review the National Planning Policy Framework to make sure the rules better protect the green belt:**
 - Give local areas powers to challenge the 'Objectively Assessed Need', which is based on Office for National Statistics population projections.
 - Make sure that when their local plans have been adopted, councils have a duty to approve development on brownfield sites first, with any proposals for green belt development blocked until they are the last possible option available (held as 'reserve sites').
 - Review the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
6. **Back the National Brownfield Institute in Wolverhampton**, to train people in site remediation and to develop new skills and technology to clean up brownfield sites.
7. **Protect and enhance the countryside in the West Midlands and improve access to the Green Belt for leisure**, including establishing a West Midlands National Park, tree planting and more projects like Wildlife Ways in Solihull.
8. **Finally, where green belt development has been approved and there is no way to stop it, work with local residents and councils to ensure that roads, schools and other public services are good enough to support both new and existing residents.**

CLEAN UP MORE DERELICT SITES AND BUILD ON BROWNFIELD FIRST

Building new homes and businesses on brownfield sites is vital if we are to relieve the pressure to build on the Green Belt. Here in the West Midlands we sadly have many derelict former industrial sites, many of which are contaminated and require cleaning up before they can be used. That is an expensive process and is the reason why so many sites have lain empty for so long. That's why we need to step in and provide the funding to clean up these sites. Regenerating derelict sites breathes new life into an area and removes eyesores which have blighted our region for years.

There is no better example than Cavendish House in Dudley, the derelict office building that everyone saw on their way into Dudley. We were able to support the council by funding the demolition of Cavendish House last year to make way for a new Portersfield development with new homes, leisure and business premises on the same site, as part of the overall improvements to Dudley town centre. **Not only does brownfield development provide new jobs, homes and opportunities, but it also restores the pride people have in their towns and cities.** We have made great progress, but we need to keep up this approach for another three years to make a real difference.

Progress made:

- **Secured a huge £458 million fund from Government to finance cleaning up derelict ex-industrial brownfield sites**, more than any other region outside London, to provide sites for new homes and business premises.
- **Over 120 acres (around 80 football pitches) of former industrial land transformed through the Combined Authority's Investment Funds alone**, creating more than 3,700 jobs, nearly 1.7 million square feet of commercial floor space and over 600 new homes.
- **Completed new homes at brownfield sites and handed the keys to new residents**, for example at Steelhouse Lane in Wolverhampton and Icknield Port Loop in Birmingham.
- **Funded and got work started on the clean up of sites that have been derelict for decades**, such as the former Harvestime Bakery, the old Caparo factory and Phoenix 10 in Walsall, the West Works former MG Rover plant in Longbridge and the former sewage works at Friar Park in Sandwell.
- **Demolished eyesore buildings such as Cavendish House in Dudley and Bull Street car park in West Bromwich.**
- **Developed a clear priority hit list of large brownfield sites in the region**, and worked with councils to bring plans forward to the Combined Authority's Housing and Land Board.
- **Secured £15 million funding from Government to build the National Brownfield Institute in Wolverhampton** to train remediation engineers and to research new technologies to clean up brownfield sites.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Spend our existing war chest of £458 million on cleaning up brownfield sites** in the West Midlands and turning them into new homes and commercial space.
- **Secure additional Government grant funding** to fund further brownfield remediation sites in the region, and expand our regional investment funds, which offer long-term repayable capital at low interest rates for brownfield developments.
- **Launch a large-scale demolition and clearance programme** to remove concrete eyesores across the region, making way for new homes, office and commercial space, following the successful demolition of Cavendish House in Dudley and Bull Street car park in West Bromwich.
- **Apply what we have learnt about getting stalled sites cleaned up for new homes to commercial properties in our town and city centres**, where there is less demand for retail premises now.
- **Open the National Brownfield Institute at Wolverhampton** and champion the research and training programmes there.
- **Strengthen our expert regional housing team** to tackle more sites more quickly, and support local authorities in their own efforts.

- **Explore how the Government could change the tax system to** help incentivise further development of brownfield sites with less need for direct grant funding, **for example call for a review of the Contaminated Land Remediation Tax Relief** so that it helps clean up more new sites.



Site clean up underway at the former Caparo engineering works site in Walsall to build 252 homes

BUILD MORE HOMES MORE QUICKLY

In the last four years, we've made a start in speeding up house-building in the West Midlands, but now we need to go even further. Every stage in the process can be streamlined to ensure that we can build as many new homes as quickly as possible, from identification of sites to planning processes and construction itself.

New technology will help us, as we look to make Wolverhampton the UK centre of expertise for Advanced Methods of Construction, bringing new jobs to the region as well as accelerating our house building. We need to clear even more derelict sites and get new apartments and family homes built as quickly as we can. **We have proven that with concerted efforts speeding up house building is possible. We should build on this success over the next three years.**

Progress made:

- **48,098 new homes built in the region in the three years 2017-2020**, nearly double the 25,000 target set in 2017.
- **Increased the overall number of homes being built for local people - 16,527 in the most recent yearly figures** - double the number of just six years ago.
- **Set up a simple streamlined way for developers to access public funding to get their schemes going as swiftly as possible**, through the Combined Authority's Single Commissioning Framework.
- **Providing thousands of training opportunities on the "Construction Gateway" scheme to train local people in construction** to access jobs in the industry.
- **Identified 5,500 hectares of land owned by the public sector in the West Midlands** (equivalent of 7,500 football pitches) and set up a taskforce to see which sites could be used for housing and regeneration.
- **Secured the relocation of Government departments and agencies which have a focus on infrastructure and construction to the West Midlands**, including Ministers and senior decision-makers, for example Homes England setting up in Coventry, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government moving over 500 jobs to Wolverhampton.
- **Led the successful lobbying campaign to locate the Government's new £10 million Advanced Methods of Construction Taskforce in Wolverhampton**, to develop the cluster of industrial expertise there.
- **Developed new homes specifically aimed at key workers** on sites such as Abberley Street and Cranford Way, close to the new Midlands Metropolitan Hospital in Sandwell.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Sustain progress towards our goal of 215,000 new homes by 2031 in the West Midlands**, and maintain record levels of housebuilding in the region.
- **Become the leading UK industry cluster of the Advanced Methods of Construction**, by increasing its use in construction projects in the region, by securing inward investment in modular housing factories in the region, and training up young people in these new construction technologies.
- **Identify publicly-owned sites through the West Midlands Public Land Taskforce which can be rapidly developed into houses or commercial space**, and where necessary seek changes to the rules to allow public bodies to sell their land for the purpose of regeneration or housebuilding rather than having to simply sell to the highest bidder.
- **Take a more proactive approach to the Combined Authority's own use of Compulsory Purchase powers** to speed up the development of stalled sites, working in tandem with local authorities.
- **Work closely with local authority planning and development departments**, supporting where appropriate by funding additional external advice or internal resources, particularly for their work on major regional 'strategic' sites, or regional joint planning work.

- **Explore whether a Mayoral Development Corporation is a suitable vehicle for delivering major regeneration sites** in the West Midlands, particularly if this secures further Government funding for projects, and use other models, such as **Town Centre Joint Venture Partnerships to bring in more private sector investment to our local town centres.**
- **Explore new ways to fund our work on house-building and regeneration,** such as the retention of Stamp Duty Land Tax, or capturing the value of rising land prices in the region.

HELP TO OWN: A NEW APPROACH TO OWNING YOUR OWN HOME

Buying a home is still too difficult for many people, in particular finding the deposit up front, and then keeping up with mortgage payments. In Wolverhampton, we are trialling a new approach called “Help to Own”:

- Aspiring homeowners take on a lease on their new home which will cover what they might normally spend on renting with no expensive deposit up front. Annually their contribution to their home will rise by 2% a year, but the 2% increase each year doesn’t go into the pockets of a landlord – it goes into a safeguarded saving scheme that builds up their capital and stake in their home.
- At the end of twenty-five years – the average length of a mortgage – people using the scheme can purchase the home outright for the cost of £1 and the “Help to Own” fund they have built up. If circumstances change before the end of the term they can cash in their “Help to Own” fund.
- “Help to Own” gives the aspiring home owner the chance to get their foot on the ladder without a deposit, affordable rents and the chance to own their own home outright on the same timeline as most people with a mortgage.

We are trialling “Help to Own” this year at The Marches in Wednesfield in Wolverhampton with 100 homes, working with Wolverhampton Council’s housing company. **If the pilot is successful, we plan to roll out “Help to Own” across the West Midlands from 2021 to 2024.**



“ Our new Help to Own scheme will mean you can use your rent payments to pay off your mortgage, with no big deposit ”

MAKE HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING AFFORDABLE FOR EVERYONE

Even with our work to increase the number of new homes built, **rents and house prices have continued to rise faster than wages in many parts of the region, because of the economic success seen in the West Midlands.** Younger people are finding it hard to buy their first home and get on the housing ladder, and renters not being able to afford a place to live is the top reason for homelessness in the region.

That's why we need to ensure that our approach to housing goes beyond the number of new homes built, to find ways to make sure everyone can access high-quality housing. We have taken innovative new approaches, both to get more affordable homes built, and campaigning for improved standards in private rented accommodation, and to secure sufficient rates of housing benefits to prevent homelessness occurring in the first place.

Progress made:

- **Agreed a deal with five of the largest housing associations in the West Midlands to build thousands of new affordable homes in the region** through the West Midlands Affordable Housing Collaborative Development Vehicle.
- **Changed the definition of affordable housing to make it genuinely affordable, so that it is based on people's income rather than on existing rents and house prices,** and changed the rules so that at least 20% of homes in a development must be affordable to qualify for Combined Authority housing funds.
- **Campaigned successfully for an increase in the level of Local Housing Allowance benefits,** which were increased in 2020 after a freeze of four years, to help prevent people from being made homeless because they couldn't afford their rent.
- **Provided accommodation for 377 people who are rough sleepers or at risk of homelessness through our Housing First scheme,** after securing nearly £10 million from Government to set the scheme up in the West Midlands.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Increase the number of new affordable homes delivered in the West Midlands per year,** including social housing, private rental, shared ownership and affordable homes to buy, **through our West Midlands Affordable Housing Collaborative Development Vehicle** with local housing associations
- **Secure an Affordable Housing Deal with Government, from the West Midlands' share of the Government's £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, and the West Midlands' share of the Government's £7.1 billion National Home Building Fund,** and get more funding from Homes England allocated to schemes in the West Midlands.
- **Continue to campaign alongside local groups, in particular BrumLAG and UK CAG, to encourage the Government to act quickly to resolve the outstanding building safety issues.**
- **Develop new "affordable by design" homes that are inexpensive to produce, well-designed, long-lasting and attractive to residents,** using new materials, modular techniques and other advanced methods of construction.
- **Continue the campaign to restore the link between Local Housing Allowance rates and local rents,** setting it to at least the 30th percentile everywhere in the country, working with homelessness charities such as Crisis and Shelter.
- **Explore launching a West Midlands Homes Show to showcase the opportunities for young people in the region to own their own homes,** including explaining schemes like Help to Buy and Help to Own.
- **Commission detailed work on shortages or surpluses of particular types of homes** in different local areas of the West Midlands.
- **Support the work to tackle poor standards in exempt accommodation,** and making sure that vulnerable groups are receiving the care that they need, and convene councils to see whether this work could be rolled out to other areas.

- **Explore with councils the potential for Combined Authority housing funds to be used for estate regeneration**, to improve the quality of homes, potentially at the same time as installing energy retrofit measures like double glazing and insulation.

DESIGNING OUT HOMELESSNESS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

For more information on what Andy has done to tackle homelessness in the West Midlands and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 7 on page 130.

MAKE OUR HOMES CLEANER AND GREENER TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

For more information on what Andy has done to make homes cleaner and greener in the West Midlands and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 5 on page 112.



Modular housing being built at Icknield Port Loop in Birmingham

ENSURE OUR BUILDINGS ARE WELL-DESIGNED AND OUR HERITAGE IS PROTECTED

As we build new homes in the region and regenerate our towns and cities, it is vital that we don't lose the character of the places that we live in. We need to make sure that new buildings and their surroundings are designed to be environmentally conscious, good to look at, and easy to live in. Our sense of history in the West Midlands is very strong, and we have some beautiful heritage buildings, which need protecting and restoring to their former glory. We have some good examples of this work across the region, but in the next three years this should be a new dedicated area of work.

Progress made:

- **Developed the West Midlands Design Charter to encourage good design across the West Midlands** in housing, civic architecture, green spaces and other urban developments, and secured backing of developers such as Lovell Partnerships and the Design Council.
- **Funded the redevelopment of heritage buildings** such as the Junction Works building in Digbeth, the Coventry Telegraph building and Pipe Hall in Bilston.
- **Welcomed the restoration of heritage buildings** such as the Moseley Road Baths, Belmont Works, the Municipal Bank on Broad Street in Birmingham, and the decision to preserve the rail terminus at Curzon Street; Priory Road Cottages, the Burges and Hales Street, and the city gates in Coventry; and houses on Queen Street in Wolverhampton.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Build on the West Midlands Design Charter**, with additional guidance for councils and developers, and seek further adoption by local authorities in the region.
- **Work with developers who are committed to high-quality environmentally conscious design**, such as Urban Splash.
- **Encourage more gentle mid-density development in town centres (three to five stories)** to increase housing supply whilst keeping the town centre feel, through the Combined Authority's work supporting town centre regeneration.
- **Develop a list of priority heritage buildings in the West Midlands for restoration, such as the former Royalty Cinema in Harborne, the historic Erdington Baths, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall and Soho Foundry in Sandwell.**
- **Support the development of highly capable Local Heritage Trusts to restore historic buildings**, following the successful model of the Historic Coventry Trust, by providing seed funding and support for development of business cases and applications to Government, the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders.
- **Back local groups in applications to the Government's £150 million Community Ownership Fund** to encourage local takeovers of community assets like pubs, post offices or heritage buildings that can be used for the community, building on our partnership with the Plunkett Foundation
- **Work with organisations like the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and the National Trust to preserve historic buildings in the region** and make them available for as many people as possible to enjoy.



“ We have some beautiful heritage buildings which need protecting and restoring to their former glory ”

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
"Tackle climate change"	Following a 22% reduction in carbon emissions in the West Midlands between 2010 and 2017, the latest available figures, we agreed a West Midlands target of reaching Net Zero by 2041, and a first five year plan to reduce emissions quickly.	
"Push bus companies to roll out... cleaner buses sooner"	Committed to making sure that all 2,100 buses in the region are clean (Euro 6 standard), the first city-region to achieve this after London. National Express has promised never to buy another diesel bus again for use in the West Midlands, with hydrogen buses being used on new routes, and Coventry has been chosen as one of the first all electric bus cities in the UK, winning £50 million of new funding to upgrade all the buses in Coventry.	
"Improve buses and trains to get people to switch"	Oversaw an increase in train ridership of 13% in the two years before the pandemic and saw an increase in bus journeys of 3% in the year before the pandemic. Brought new trains and new buses onto the network, upgraded rail and bus stations and kept fares low.	
"Support low carbon and environmental businesses"	Welcomed commitments from some of the largest companies in the region to reach Net Zero, for example Jaguar Land Rover by 2030, Severn Trent by 2030 and Birmingham Airport by 2033, kicked off a new programme of generating low carbon energy for Black Country industrial businesses, and secured £3 million of funding for projects to trial new innovative clean energy technologies.	
"Develop sustainable housing standards for energy efficiency and low carbon technologies"	Launched the WMCA Design Charter, which requires high environmental standards on any new homes built using Combined Authority funding, worked with developers who are committed to high-quality environmentally conscious design, such as Urban Splash, and launched the Zero Carbon Homes Taskforce to make sure all new homes in the region meet tough zero carbon standards from 2025 onwards.	
"Support the creation of green urban spaces"	Launched the West Midlands Virtual Forest to encourage people to plant trees in their local area, with over 17,000 trees registered so far, funded urban 'pocket park' green spaces, and agreed a new programme of Community Green Grants for local groups to spend on environmental projects in their area.	

KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Meet our #WM2041 target of becoming a net zero region by 2041	Reduce carbon emissions in the transport, industrial and domestic sectors through large-scale green programmes, and improve the natural environment in the region to improve the environment.	
Improve our public transport system to reduce emissions	Continue the massive investment in the public transport system in the West Midlands, with £1.1 billion already committed, and move to green technology such as electric and hydrogen buses and trains.	
Accelerate industry moves towards green technology	Create at least 21,000 new green jobs in the low carbon sector by 2026, and turn hundreds of thousands more jobs in the region green by cleaning up industries such as the automotive and manufacturing industries. Use COP26 as an opportunity to bring businesses together to accelerate their efforts, and encourage businesses in making their own premises energy efficient, in particular in retail units and office buildings	
Reduce fuel bills and carbon emissions in the region's homes	Launch a massive regional programme to improve the energy efficiency of homes with the installation of smart meters and thermostats, wall and loft insulation, double glazing, heat pumps and hydrogen-ready boilers, installing measures in at least 290,000 homes in the West Midlands by 2026 , and create thousands of jobs for retrofit and heating.	
Make the mass switch over to electric vehicles happen in the West Midlands	Secure investment in a new battery Gigafactory at Coventry airport to help manufacturers in the region transition to electric vehicles. Roll out thousands of new electric vehicle charging points , both on street and at people's homes to charge cars overnight, at offices and car parks to charge during the day, and create thousands of new jobs in electric charging point engineering, planning, installation and maintenance across the West Midlands.	
Invest in nature to keep the West Midlands a great place to live	Invest in nature and our surroundings by opening new urban parks like the Digbeth "Highline" viaduct park, replanting trees in areas such as Shakespeare's Forest of Arden, backing community projects like Solihull's "Wildlife Ways", and creating a new National Trail for walkers around the Green Belt of the West Midlands.	
Tackle the disgraceful litter and fly tipping in our region	Run a Great West Midlands Clean Up campaign against litter, fly-tipping and graffiti ahead of the Commonwealth Games to make sure we are ready to welcome the world to our region.	

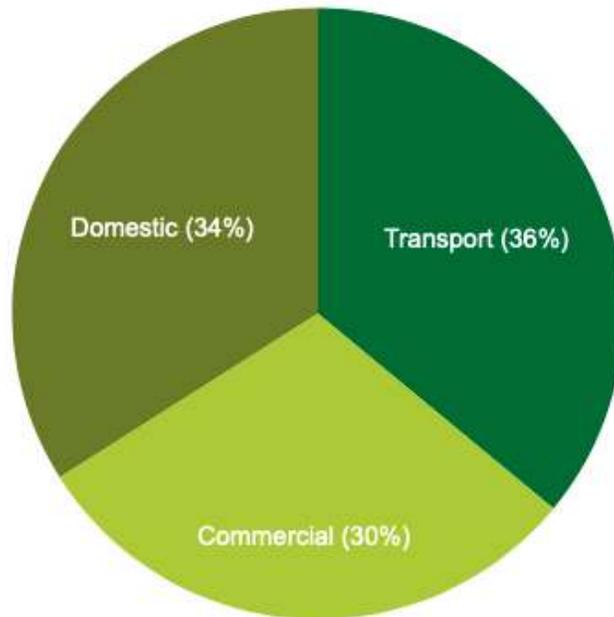
WEST MIDLANDS 2041: REDUCING OUR CARBON EMISSIONS TO NET ZERO

The science is clear on the harmful consequences if we continue our carbon emissions at the same rate as today, and we are already seeing the effects of climate change, with extreme weather events around the world and global temperatures increasing. That's why the Combined Authority took the important step of declaring in 2019, that we as a region believe we are facing a climate emergency.

We are making some progress in reducing our carbon emissions with around a 4% decrease per year, with a 22% reduction between 2010 and 2017. But this is not fast enough, so **we asked climate scientists at the independent Tyndall Centre for Climate Change to set targets for the West Midlands which were ambitious** and would meet the requirements of the Paris international climate agreement.

The targets which we agreed were to **reduce carbon emissions by 13% a year, and for the West Midlands to reach net zero by 2041**, nine years earlier than the overall UK target of 2050. However to hit these ambitious targets, a large part of the reductions will have to come in the first five years of the period. Therefore we need to take rapid action, and the Combined Authority has already agreed its first Five Year Plan to achieve accelerated reduction in carbon emissions.

THE SPLIT OF CARBON EMISSIONS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS



In the West Midlands, carbon emissions mainly falls into three types: transport (36%), Industry and commercial (30%), and domestic (34%). To reduce our carbon emissions therefore we need to find effective ways to make each of these sectors greener. Below you will find my detailed plans for how we reduce carbon emissions in each of these areas, and also how we enhance the natural environment across the region.

We have **set a credible target for carbon reduction to net zero of 2041, based on scientific advice**, and we have **gained agreement from all members of the Combined Authority to the scale and urgency of the challenge**. We have already allocated over £1.1 billion to improving clean public transport in the region, millions more to other environmental projects, and have **kicked off our programme of domestic retrofit with a £2 million regional demonstrator project**.

By 2024, our overall target is to have reduced carbon emissions by a further 36%, setting us well on the way to our 2041 net zero target. Not only will this protect the environment, but it will also **create huge opportunities for businesses in the region, with 21,000 new green jobs estimated to be created in the next five years alone and hundreds of thousands of existing jobs going green with new technologies being adopted**.

The Government has committed to its Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, which will provide over £12 billion of funding to these efforts across the country. We will make the most of that funding to reach our environmental ambition in the West Midlands. By working together, with businesses and residents across the region, we can do what is necessary to protect the environment for future generations in the West Midlands and create jobs for local people today.

A GREENER CLEANER PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Getting around in the West Midlands accounts for around 36% of our overall carbon emissions. **Dirty buses, lorries and cars not only emit carbon, which contributes to climate change, but they also give off small particles, which make the air we breathe dirty** and cause lung disease, asthma and other conditions.

However, we need transport to get around to get to work, to take children to school and much more. So **the answer has to be improving our transport network, both cleaning it up, with new electric and clean buses, and extending the network, so that people can make the choice to use public transport, cycle or walk instead of driving**. We have made great progress, investing hundreds of millions of pounds in the last four years and spending seven times as much this year as in 2015, but there is much more to do to make it a world-class transport network fit for a world-class region.

For more information on what Andy has done to improve the public transport system, and encourage cycling and walking in the West Midlands and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 2 on page 50.

SUPPORTING THE MOVE TO ZERO EMISSION ELECTRIC VEHICLES

As the home of the automotive industry in the UK, it's only right that we should aim to be a leader in adopting this new technology. Through developments in battery technology, electric vehicles can now achieve hundreds of miles on a single charge, making them a great choice. And with costs coming down as the technology develops and new models are brought out, uptake will grow in the coming years.

However, there is a role for us to play in accelerating the move to electric vehicles. **We need better charging infrastructure, we need to help people upgrade vehicles where they can't afford to, and we need to help the automotive industry make the huge investments it needs to move to battery technology.** So far, we are lagging behind, with one of the lowest rates of electric vehicle charge points in the country. It is clear that we need to take a new and ambitious regional approach, supported by new investment from Government. **As Mayor, I will convene and support local authorities, and bring in new funding to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles in the West Midlands.**

Progress made:

- **Worked with the regional team to secure funding from Government for the £126 million National Battery Industrialisation Centre**, which has already been built and opened in Coventry to develop new battery technology, including £18 million directly from the Combined Authority.
- **Leading the campaign to bring a battery Gigafactory to the West Midlands**, meeting carmakers and battery manufacturers in the UK and in China, gaining agreement to the most suitable site at Coventry Airport, and brokering support from the British Government to secure a new factory.
- **Backed our region's manufacturers in their electrification efforts** such as LEVC building electric vans and taxis in Coventry, and Jaguar Land Rover creating electric versions of all their models.
- **Secured commitment from the Government** to provide financial support of up to £500 million to bring in Gigafactory investment to the UK.
- **Set up a new electric vehicle training centre in Wolverhampton** to train local young people as mechanics for the new technology.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Roll out thousands of new electric vehicle charging points (7-22kW)**, both on street and at people's homes to charge cars overnight, at offices and car parks to charge during the day, and rapid chargers (50kW+) at service stations for when a quick top-up is needed.
- **Set up the charging stations for our new electric and hydrogen bus fleets** in the West Midlands with National Express and other operators in the Bus Alliance.
- **Create thousands of new jobs in electric charging point engineering, planning, installation and maintenance** across the West Midlands.
- **Seek additional funding from Government to support a scrappage scheme** to encourage people to exchange their older polluting vehicles for newer clean vehicles, and work with the licensing authorities in councils to develop an **accelerated plan to support taxi and private hire drivers to clean up their vehicles**, including new financial support and investment in charging points.
- **Work with financial investors to develop new models of financing electric charging infrastructure in the region**, making sure that charges for drivers are still cheap enough to make it worth switching to an electric vehicle, and **secure further Government funding to roll out charging**, particularly in places with low levels of uptake so far.
- **Develop a capital investment programme to reinforce the power grid in the region with Western Power and National Grid** to enable this increase in demand for electricity, and to support our industrial businesses in accessing clean energy.
- **Back research efforts in the region to develop new electric or hydrogen heavy trucks** for the freight and logistics industry, and to **develop low carbon aerospace technology**

through the Government's Jet Zero challenge, for example at Rolls Royce in Solihull, Meggitt in Coventry and UTC in Wolverhampton.

For more information on what Andy has done to support the automotive industry and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 1 on page 14.



Visiting the London Electric Vehicle Company in Coventry

CLEAN INDUSTRIES WE CAN BE PROUD OF

As the home of the Industrial Revolution we have a fine heritage of innovation and of deploying new technologies, particularly in manufacturing. Now we are all more aware of the dangers of climate change, and the impact our activities have on the planet, **we have a responsibility to lead the world again in the Green Industrial Revolution.**

Industrial emissions make up 30% of the total carbon output in the region, and therefore if we are to tackle climate change, **we need to support our businesses in cleaning up their operations and becoming clean industries we can be proud of.** There are also huge opportunities for businesses in this new low carbon economy, which have the potential to create tens of thousands of jobs in the region over the next few years. If we work together and clean up our industries, we can pass on green jobs and businesses to future generations.

Progress made:

- **Welcomed commitments from some of the largest companies in the region to reach Net Zero**, for example Jaguar Land Rover by 2030, Severn Trent by 2030 and Birmingham Airport by 2033.
- **Kicked off a new programme of generating low carbon energy for Black Country industrial businesses**, by creating small-scale new power stations on brownfield sites using local resources including commercial waste and renewable energy, after winning funding from Innovate UK.
- **Secured £3 million of funding for projects to trial new innovative clean energy technologies** in Coventry, Sandwell and Rugeley through West Midlands Energy Capital.
- **Launched a West Midlands Net Zero Business Pledge to get businesses in the region to take responsibility for their own plans** to get to Net Zero.
- **Set up the Green Innovation Challenge as part of the West Midlands 5G testbed** to identify and support startups with innovative ideas to develop them into growing businesses.
- **Supported the work of West Midlands research centres such as the Energy Research Accelerator facilities and the Energy Systems Catapult**, and championed the work of Energy Capital which brings together the region's players in the energy sector, and runs a programme of Energy Innovation Zones.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Create at least 21,000 new green jobs in the low carbon sector by 2026, and turn hundreds of thousands more jobs in the region green** by cleaning up industries such as the automotive and manufacturing industries.
- **Host the UK100 joint meeting of Mayors and council leaders in the UK, linked to the COP26 summit, to commit to tackling climate change** and to call on Government for more devolution to allow local areas to transition to clean technology.
- **Bring regional businesses together during the COP26 international climate summit in Glasgow in November 2021 to secure pledges for action**, and continue to secure more commitments from businesses on their own efforts to reduce carbon emissions.
- **Encourage businesses in making their own premises energy efficient, in particular in retail units and office buildings**, by providing expertise and support to make the business case for these investments, and **explore opportunities to use solar panels, particularly on large flat roofs** of warehousing and industrial units in the region, for example on the roof of the new Gigafactory, like the 167,000 sq ft of solar panels on the new Meggitt facility in Ansty Park.
- **Use poorer quality land where appropriate to generate renewable solar or wind energy**, explore for example moveable solar panel farms, which could be used on sites while they are waiting for development, and connected to the grid.
- **Explore setting up Energy for West Midlands to make sure that energy infrastructure investments meet the needs of businesses and residents**, building on the existing Energy Capital partnership. This regional energy body would bring together all the parties in the energy

system and agree a detailed Local Energy Area Plan infrastructure plan to deliver our 2041 net zero target, including how to meet new demands on the network such as new electric vehicle charging points or a new large-scale battery Gigafactory manufacturing plant.

- **Oversee the first ever carbon neutral Commonwealth Games**, working with Severn Trent to reduce the waste and energy usage, and to offset the carbon emissions through tree-planting and enhancing natural capital in the region.
- **Develop the green finance sector in the region**, working with banks and investors to finance environmental projects, and **prioritise low carbon businesses in our inward investment efforts** to bring new green jobs to the region.

SUPPORTING LOW CARBON INDUSTRIES

For more information on what Andy has done to support low carbon industries in the West Midlands and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 1 on page 36.



A battery created at the new UK Battery Industrialisation Centre in Coventry

REDUCING YOUR ENERGY BILLS AND MAKING HOMES GREENER

A huge proportion of our total carbon emissions in the region, around 34%, come from our homes, in particular central heating. That's why **we need to make big investments in making homes more energy efficient and look at new ways of heating our homes**. Not only will this tackle climate change but it will also reduce fuel poverty, saving residents on their fuel bills.

So, with the Government, we need to help homeowners and landlords with the costs of improvements, and we also need to take advantage of the opportunities that this presents for businesses and people in the region. We should help new businesses set up to supply insulation, double glazing and smart meters, and help our young people get jobs as fitters, technicians and managers. **Only by making our homes greener, with a retrofit programme on a massive scale, can we stand a chance tackling climate change in time.**

Progress made:

- **Launched the Zero Carbon Homes Taskforce to make sure *all* new homes in the region meet tough zero carbon standards** from 2025 onwards, and approved £2 million for a Net Zero neighbourhood demonstrator trial project to show how energy efficiency measures could work together in a local area, and to fund a retrofit centre of expertise to help councils accelerate retrofitting efforts in West Midlands homes.
- **Set up the Warmer Homes West Midlands Programme**, with around £1 million of funding from the Energy Redress Scheme to help more than 7,000 homes with fuel poverty and energy efficiency measures, using a team of outreach workers across the West Midlands.
- **Launched the WMCA Design Charter which requires high environmental standards on any new homes built using Combined Authority funding**, and **committed to plans to build zero carbon homes with developers who are focus on high-quality environmentally conscious design**, such as Urban Splash.
- **Created new courses and facilities to train young people for low carbon jobs**, such as the electric vehicle training centre in Wolverhampton, and won £500,000 to create new 16-week green construction skills bootcamps to train young people in retrofit and energy efficiency construction.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Launch a massive regional programme to improve the energy efficiency of homes** with the installation of smart meters and thermostats, wall and loft insulation, double glazing, heat pumps and hydrogen-ready boilers, funding by the Energy Company Obligation and new Government funding, **installing measures in at least 290,000 homes in the West Midlands by 2026.**
- **Create thousands of jobs for retrofit and heating, and direct our skills and training funding to providing more training places for the new green jobs** like heat pump installers, retrofit engineers, and in electric vehicle manufacture and maintenance.
- **Call for a new Government programme of domestic energy efficiency retrofit measures, following the end of the Green Homes Grant, secure the West Midlands share of the £1 billion Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund** and the £50 million available to improve energy efficiency in social housing, and **work with councils and social landlords to drive the energy efficiency improvements in the homes they manage.**
- **Make sure new homes being built meet high environmental standards**, whether through the West Midlands Combined Authority Design Charter or the Government's Future Homes Standard, creating the first zero carbon homes in the region by next year.
- **Become the UK centre of expertise in Advanced Methods of Construction (AMC), making the most of the new £10 million Government task force based in Wolverhampton, and working to attract new factories to build modular homes** here in the West Midlands.
- **Support regional trials of new technologies such as using hydrogen to heat homes (working with partners like Cadent), winning funding from the Government's £240 million Net Zero Hydrogen Fund, and developing low carbon heat networks**, in areas such as Solihull, West Bromwich and Smethwick.
- **Seek the devolution of the Energy Company Obligation** funding which energy companies pay so that we can coordinate and control our decarbonisation plans as a region.

TAKING CARE OF NATURE AND OUR SURROUNDINGS

As well as reducing our carbon emissions, **we need to work to protect and enhance our natural environment**. Not only will this help our fight against climate change, but it will also make our lives and surroundings more enjoyable, and make the West Midlands an even better place to live in. In an urban region, this is a huge challenge that will require us to be creative and ambitious.

First of all, we need to take a tougher stance on those who pollute the environment, whether in construction, industry, or fly-tipping and littering. At all levels, we must make it everyone's duty to protect the world around them. Then whether it is planting trees or wildflowers in our green spaces, or creating new green space in unexpected places, we can actively improve the places we live. We should aim for a net gain in biodiversity in the region. **Building on our progress, with fresh urgency, we can make the West Midlands the green heart of the UK.**

Progress made:

- **Launched the West Midlands Virtual Forest to encourage people to plant trees in their local area, with over 17,000 trees registered so far**, approved a further £1 million for community green projects, and funded the development work for the proposed West Midlands National Park.
- **Agreed the West Midlands Design Charter, committing to high environmental standards for new developments and demonstrating this in new West Midlands developments with green space and new parks**, such as the development in Icknield Port in Edgbaston and in Longbridge.
- **The Black Country was awarded UNESCO Global Geopark status in July 2020**, which includes sites like Wren's Nest Nature Reserve, Sandwell Valley, Walsall Arboretum and Bantock Park.
- **Contributed £2 million to Solihull's Wildlife Ways programme**, and worked with the New Economics Foundation to identify other areas where communities need more access to green space.
- **Funded urban 'pocket park' green spaces**, for example at Abbots Lane in Coventry and improvements for urban open spaces in Willenhall, Tipton and Foleshill, Coventry to encourage their use for physical activity.
- **Protected green spaces on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation by taking a brownfield first approach to housing development, and opposing unnecessary proposals like the second runway at Birmingham Airport and the service station proposed on the M42.**

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Open the Duddeston Viaduct in Digbeth as a public green walkway**, with incredible views over Digbeth and the Birmingham skyline: our own version of New York's High Line, and **fund urban green spaces such as pocket parks**, so that everyone in the West Midlands can access green space within 15 minutes of their home.
- **Expand the West Midlands virtual forest, in particular looking at ways we can replant historical forests like Shakespeare's Forest of Arden**, building on Solihull Council's commitment to plant 250,000 trees over the next 10 years and Severn Trent's commitment to planting 2,022 acres of forest for the Commonwealth Games.
- **Work with the Woodland Trust and other tree-planting groups to explore setting up West Midlands Tree Nursery locations of British Native species** such as oak, elm, hawthorn, ash, and beech trees, where residents with gardens or land where they wish to plant a tree can collect or purchase discounted saplings, potentially working with garden centres in the region.
- **Expand Solihull's Wildlife Ways into a West Midlands-wide programme of projects, including tree, hedgerow and wildflower planting, small habitat grants for local conservation projects and improved cycling and walking access**, potentially using successor funds to the European Regional Development Fund.

- **Back the ambitious plans for the West Midlands National Park**, developed by Professor Kathryn Moore at Birmingham City University, to weave together river valleys and green spaces throughout the West Midlands, into a coherent plan to protect and enhance nature, and to create new spaces for residents to use for leisure.
- **Invest in a new Black Country programme of nature and visitor improvements to go alongside the new UNESCO World Geopark status**, for example at the Leasowes in Halesowen, Sedgley Beacon, Wolverhampton's West Park, Wren's Nest, Saltwells Nature Reserve, Sandwell Valley Country Park, Walsall Arboretum and Barr Beacon.
- **Enhance the natural environment on and around the world-famous canal network in the region**, by supporting the restoration efforts such as the Lapal Canal in Selly Oak, and the Lichfield and Hatherton Canal, to restore the link to the Black Country, and working with the Canal and River Trust to improve towpaths, access and signage, and **explore the potential for a scheme which would support canal boat owners to retrofit their boats** with cleaner power sources such as hydrogen or electric.
- Explore whether it is possible to **incorporate tree-lined streets into the finished design for every West Midlands transport scheme** which involves redesigning streets and is funded by the Combined Authority.
- **Work with non-constituent Combined Authority councils to encourage West Midlands farmers and landowners outside the main urban areas to improve nature on their land**, by taking advantage of the new post-Brexit agricultural subsidy regime.
- **Build on the West Midlands Natural Capital Plan to turn it into detailed delivery plans, and secure the funding** to make sure the proposed projects can go ahead, working with Sustainability West Midlands, the Local Nature Partnerships and groups such as the Woodland Trust and the Wildlife Trust in the West Midlands.



Visiting the Wildlife Ways project in Solihull with Councillor Karen Grinsell

CREATE A NEW NATIONAL TRAIL IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

There is currently no National Trail in the Midlands, with trails like the Cotswold Way, Pennine Way and the Thames Path in other parts of the UK. **That can't be right when we have beautiful countryside around the region, and there is such a need to provide more access to green space for all the residents of the West Midlands.** That's why we should explore this new proposal:

- **Explore creating a new National Trail, the Mercian Trail, forming a loop following the Green Belt around the urban West Midlands.**
- **Work with councils and national bodies such as Natural England and the National Trust to link together existing footpaths,** starting with the section from the Lickey Hills, through the Clent Hills, to Wychbury Hill near Stourbridge.
- **Invite local ramblers and walking groups in the region to help scout out and design the final proposed route.**
- **Seek funding from Natural England to develop these plans** and turn them into reality.

SOME OF THE PLACES AROUND THE WEST MIDLANDS THE NEW NATIONAL TRAIL COULD LINK UP



PROTECTING THE GREEN BELT AND BROWNFIELD FIRST

For more information on what Andy has done to protect the Green Belt and regenerate derelict sites and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 4 on page 92.

THE GREAT WEST MIDLANDS CLEAN UP

In 2022, the eyes of the world will be on the West Midlands as we host the Commonwealth Games. **But there are still far too many parts of the region where litter, fly-tipping, and rubbish are strewn all over our streets, on grass verges and in hedgerows.** We're going to need a huge effort to clean up so that we can be proud to host athletes, visitors and the media.

Local councils are in charge of collecting our bins and keeping our public spaces clean and tidy, not the Mayor, but given that the Commonwealth Games are so important to the reputation of the West Midlands, **it is right that we all work together to support our councils in the run-up to the Games.**

That's why **I will lead the Great West Midlands Clean Up ahead of the Commonwealth Games**, where we all take responsibility for cleaning up our region. We will:

- **Bring together community, faith and local neighbourhood groups to run an enormous volunteer litter-picking and clean-up programme** ahead of the Games in July 2022.
- **Appoint lead organisations in local areas to co-ordinate efforts**, for example World Against Single Use Plastic in Walsall.
- **Coordinate efforts by local businesses and associations like the Business Improvement Districts** to smarten up their surroundings, for example repainting shop fronts, and keeping their areas clean, and explore corporate sponsorship of roads and verges during and after the Games.
- Work with councils and West Midlands Police to **crack down on littering and fly-tipping.**
- **Encourage West Midlands councils to work together to make sure street cleaning and waste collection is world-class ahead of the Games**, exploring if neighbouring councils could provide support if needed.
- **Clean up our parks, canals and other green spaces** as well as our urban spaces, so that we all have pleasant spaces for leisure.

Having the focal point of the Commonwealth Games will galvanise thousands of people into action, but we must aim for long-term change, where communities come together to demand that their local area is kept clean, so that we can restore pride in the streets of the West Midlands.



Andy's Street Clean volunteer litterpicking team in Coventry

CHAMPIONING THE WEST MIDLANDS CULTURAL AND SPORTING RENAISSANCE

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
“Support Coventry’s bid for 2021 UK City of Culture ”	Championed the winning Coventry City of Culture 2021 bid, and contributed over £35 million of Combined Authority funding.	
“Support Birmingham’s bid for the Commonwealth Games”	Championed the winning Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022, delivering the transport improvements and skills programme for the Games, securing funding for the trade, tourism and investment programme, and contributed over £54 million of direct Combined Authority funding.	
“Make the West Midlands a centre of excellence for women’s and disabled sports”	Commonwealth Games has the largest ever para sport programme, and the first ever major Games with more medals for women than for men, and backed the regional Include Me WM programme to support making sport and physical activity more accessible to people with disabilities.	
“Support small-scale community cultural and sporting activities”	Set up projects like the Mayor’s Community Weekend, the Mayor’s Cricket Cup, Diwali on the Square and grants to support cultural social enterprises and improvements to local areas through the Better Streets Community Fund.	
“Encourage national and international tourism in the West Midlands”	Oversaw an increase in international tourism to the West Midlands by an estimated 5% (70,000 more visits) between 2017 and 2019, and set up the West Midlands Regional Board for Tourism to lead our efforts to grow visitor numbers in the future with the West Midlands Growth Company.	

KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Use Coventry City of Culture to lead our region's recovery from COVID-19

Bring thousands of visitors to Coventry bringing in money to local businesses, train young people and give them opportunities which they can take with them to build their careers in the arts, hospitality or management. Create lasting benefits to Coventry like **upgraded cultural venues, improvements to the city centre and to the local transport network** and **new green urban spaces**



Oversee a successful Birmingham Commonwealth Games which makes sure residents feel the benefits

Host a Commonwealth Games we can all be proud of across the West Midlands, secure a high proportion of the contracts for local firms, support 6,600 people into training and jobs through the Jobs and Skills Academy, **encourage businesses to create new jobs in the West Midlands** through the Trade, Tourism and Investment Programme, and secure **permanent transport improvements for residents**, like refurbished rail stations and new bus routes.



Kickstart the region's cultural renaissance

Seek to agree a joint cultural investment plan for the West Midlands with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Arts Council, which levels up cultural funding in the West Midlands, and **develop the existing arts organisations and stimulate new arts activities in the Black Country. Support plans to bring the Government Art Collection to Coventry and develop the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery**, making more of its collections accessible to the public.



Make the West Midlands a world-class sporting region

Attract further international sporting events in the West Midlands such as games during the 2030 Men's World Cup, seek the return of the Birmingham International Marathon and motor racing on the streets of the West Midlands. **Strengthen the programme of community sports in the region, and bring new sports facilities** to the West Midlands such as a velodrome.



COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE 2021

Coventry's time as UK City of Culture will run from May 2021 to May 2022. It's a great opportunity to showcase Coventry and the wider West Midlands to the world, and to create long-lasting benefits for residents. I am proud that the Combined Authority was the single biggest funder of Coventry City of Culture because of the huge benefits for citizens in the region.

How Andy and the West Midlands Combined Authority have supported Coventry City of Culture:

- **Supported and championed the Coventry bid** to win the UK City of Culture competition against Stoke, Swansea, Paisley and Sunderland.
- **Contributed £31 million to regenerate the city ahead of the festival**, including new lighting, public art and transport improvements including upgrading Pool Meadow bus station, better coach parking, and new cycle routes.
- **Provided a further £4 million to cover the costs of the activities celebrating the arts.**
- **Agreed £40 million funding for the renovation of Coventry station**, to create a new spacious and attractive gateway to the city including new shops, waiting areas and a large new car park.
- **Train over 700 young people through a £500,000 skills project** with Coventry provider PET-Xi.

Some of the highlights to look forward to during 2021-2022:

- **Terry Hall Presents Home Sessions** - The Specials' vocalist curates a weekend of pioneering and contemporary music.
- **International Booker Prize winner announcement, Coventry Big Booker Read** and an event to bring the shortlisted authors for the 2021 Booker Prize for Fiction to Coventry.
- **Turner Prize** - the world-renowned art prize will be held at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in September 2021.
- **Contains Strong Language** - the BBC's spoken word festival comes to Coventry.
- **Faith with the Royal Shakespeare Company** - the RSC co-produces 24 hours of music, theatre, installation and ritual across the city.
- **UK Asian Film Festival** - the world's longest-running South Asian film festival will be held in Coventry in 2021.

With long-lasting benefits across the West Midlands:

- **Thousands of visitors to Coventry bringing in money to local businesses**, predicted to generate £106 million for the region's tourism sector.
- **Upgrades to cultural venues** in Coventry: Belgrade Theatre, Coventry Cathedral, Albany Theatre, Drapers Hall, Daimler Powerhouse, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and St. Mary's Guildhall.
- **Lasting improvements to the city centre and to the local transport network.**
- **Training and experiences that young people** can take with them to build their careers in the arts, hospitality or management.
- **New green urban spaces**, like the new Linear Park.



“ Coventry City of Culture is a great opportunity to showcase Coventry to the world ”

SUPPORTING OUR WORLD-CLASS CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

Here in the West Midlands, we have the potential for a cultural renaissance, despite the challenges that the pandemic has brought. As we know, culture can drive economic growth, equip younger people with vital new skills, entice tourists and unite our communities. We are an incredibly diverse region where people and influences meet, providing us with which provides us with cultural vibrancy and creativity.

We have made great progress so far, and the opportunities of Coventry City of Culture, the cultural programme of the Commonwealth Games, and Festival UK 2022 provide us with a brilliant platform to showcase our cultural organisations. But let's be clear - given the challenges which Coronavirus has thrown at the sector this last year, there's much work to be done to secure a vibrant world-class cultural future in the West Midlands..

Progress made:

- **Set up a Cultural Leadership Board to lead the coordination of the cultural sector in the region,** particularly around Coventry City of Culture 2021 and Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022.
- **Campaigned for financial support for West Midlands arts organisations during the Coronavirus pandemic,** after which £34 million of new funding was allocated to organisations like the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Belgrade Theatre in Coventry and Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton.
- Lobbied senior ministers and campaigned with other Mayors for **additional support from the Government for cultural sector self-employed workers and freelancers** who have been hard hit by the Coronavirus pandemic.
- **Provided over £250,000 financial support** to complete the development of the new community arts space at Symphony Hall.
- **Showcased our world-class BME arts scene with events like the annual Diwali on the Square** festival in Victoria Square.
- **Set up a West Midlands pilot programme to offer £30,000 grants to small social enterprises in the cultural sector** in the West Midlands.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Support plans to bring the Government Art Collection to the West Midlands,** potentially at a new national arts hub on the old IKEA site and at Whitefriars Monastery in Coventry.
- **Back the plans to develop the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, making more of its collections accessible to the public,** and creating a new world-class Museum of Industry and Science, around the High Speed 2 station at Curzon Street.
- Work with the Arts Council on an intensive programme to **develop the existing arts organisations and stimulate new arts activities in the Black Country.**
- **Make the most of the Festival UK 2022,** pressing for as much investment as possible in arts and cultural activities in the West Midlands.
- **Campaign for the European Union and the Government to negotiate a new agreement that will allow West Midlands artists, musicians, actors, and other creatives to tour and work freely,** without costly and burdensome visa restrictions.
- **Explore a West Midlands arts social prescribing pilot,** which would work with the NHS to prescribe participation in arts activities that could benefit people's health, and fund arts organisations for running these activities.
- **Continue to campaign for arts funding to be 'levelled up',** with more allocated to the West Midlands, rather than being skewed towards London.
- **Seek to agree a joint cultural investment plan for the West Midlands** with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Arts Council, the Combined Authority, and cultural

organisations in the region, and **lobby for further capital funding for cultural venues** such as Sandwell's Festival Site & Country Park and Stratford-upon-Avon's Swan Theatre.

- **Work to develop and showcase more culture from our diverse communities** through City of Culture, the Commonwealth Games, the Festival of Britain and beyond.
- **Develop new approaches to help operators, businesses, social enterprises, and charities in the cultural sector to be sustainable**, working with existing organisations like Culture Central.
- **Continue to be advised by and provide support to the expert West Midlands Combined Authority Cultural Leadership Board.**

PUTTING THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AT THE HEART OF OUR INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

For more information on what Andy has done to support the creative industries and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 1 on page 33.



Outside the new extension to Symphony Hall for community arts use, funded in part by the Combined Authority

BIRMINGHAM COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2022

The Commonwealth Games is a once in a generation opportunity to present Birmingham and the wider West Midlands to the world, and the Games will also provide great opportunities for people in the region.

How Andy and the West Midlands Combined Authority have supported the Birmingham Commonwealth Games:

- **Supported and championed the Birmingham bid** to win the Commonwealth Games against Liverpool and international cities like Kuala Lumpur.
- **Contributed £56 million funding for the renovation of University station**, £31 million to refurbish Perry Barr station, and £88 million to provide rapid bus routes from Walsall to Birmingham Airport, and from Solihull to Walsall.
- **Secured £145 million funding from Government for 5,000 homes** around the Commonwealth Games in Perry Barr, with a further £20 million from the Combined Authority, and £25 million to contribute to the redevelopment of the Alexander Stadium.
- **Creating and leading the Commonwealth Jobs and Skills Academy to train young people** in team leading, digital marketing, sports coaching, events management, and hospitality before and during the Games.
- Lobbied the Government successfully for a further £21 million funding for the **Trade, Tourism and Investment Programme alongside the Commonwealth Games**, aiming at bringing businesses and jobs to the region.

Some of the highlights to look forward to in 2022:

- **Over 1 million tickets to see top athletes from 72 countries competing** in 20 different sports.
- **Largest ever para sport programme, and the first ever major Games with more medals for women than for men.**
- **Sports at venues in Birmingham, Sutton Coldfield, Coventry, Solihull, Wolverhampton, Leamington, Cannock**, and training camps across the region.
- **A cultural programme from March to September 2022 with over 200 events, from over 450 artists and creatives**, with 90% of commissioned work from people based in or originally from the West Midlands.

With long-lasting benefits across the West Midlands

- **At least £600M extra Government investment in the West Midlands region**, with a high proportion of the contracts expected to go to local firms.
- **At least 6,000 people helped into work or training opportunities related to the Games through the Jobs and Skills Academy run by the Combined Authority**, and an overall economic benefit of at least £1.1 billion.
- **International business expo to encourage businesses to move to the West Midlands.**
- **Permanent transport improvements for residents**, like refurbished rail stations and new bus routes.
- **New and improved sporting facilities** at the Alexander Stadium and the Sandwell Aquatics Centre.

VENUES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES ACROSS THE WEST MIDLANDS



THE MAYOR'S BIG COMMONWEALTH CLEAN UP

For more information on what Andy plans to do to make sure the region is clean and tidy ahead of the Commonwealth Games, please see Chapter 5 on page 117.

MAKING THE WEST MIDLANDS A WORLD-CLASS SPORTING REGION

The West Midlands has a long history of great sporting success, and top clubs in football, cricket, rugby and many other sports. We also have a huge wealth of local clubs and grassroots sports activities, which allow people to get involved within their local communities. Giving young people the opportunity to stay active, try sports, and potentially go on to be the sports stars of the future is vital. **The Commonwealth Games will be a brilliant boost for the region, and we need to use the opportunity to strengthen sport at all levels, and build on our recent progress.**

Progress made:

- **Brokered the 10-year deal to have Coventry City FC return to play home games at the Ricoh Arena**, after a year of tough negotiations.
- **Agreed the West Midlands 'On the Move' strategy and kicked off the first actions, such as the Goodgym project** which gets people to do good deeds while being physically active.
- **Set up community sports initiatives to encourage people to keep active**, like the Mayor's inter-generational Cricket Cup and a project with the Edgbaston Foundation to give away cricket bats and kit to disadvantaged young people.
- Ran the Include Me West Midlands campaign to **increase the number of disabled people who take part in sport and activity** in the region.
- **Launched a three-year programme to develop leaders in sport in the region** and their leadership skills with University of Birmingham.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Working with the region's top clubs to develop the facilities and amenities at and around their stadiums**, like the plan to open up the area around the Molineux in Wolverhampton, around Villa Park in Witton, or at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry.
- **Support the campaign to build a West Midlands velodrome** after the Commonwealth Games by developing a business case and seeking funding.
- **Seek to host international sporting events in the West Midlands** like the European Rugby Champions Cup final, IPL cricket matches or World Cup matches at Villa Park if the UK wins the 2030 Men's Football World Cup.
- **Seek the return of the Birmingham International Marathon after the Commonwealth Games**, and challenge the Mayor of London and Mayor of Greater Manchester to run it alongside me to raise money for charity.
- **Revisit plans to bring motor racing back to the streets of the West Midlands**, to promote the West Midlands automotive industry. Investigate Formula E, other EV races, and autonomous vehicle competitions, working with the relevant local councils, in a way that isn't too costly for the taxpayer.
- **Strengthen the programme of community sports in the region**, particularly in the period after the Commonwealth Games, by supporting local clubs and organisations like Sport Birmingham, Active Black Country, Birmingham Youth Sports Academy, ThinkActive, and partnering with gyms and regional businesses like Gymshark to promote fitness to younger people.
- **Work with local authorities and the Football Foundation to bring new sports facilities to the West Midlands**, such as artificial pitches, improved grass pitches and new clubhouses, including new pitches at Bloxwich Active Living Centre, Knowle FC, the University of Birmingham and new changing rooms at Maypole FC.

GETTING THE WEST MIDLANDS CYCLING AND WALKING

For more information on what Andy has done to encourage people to cycle and walk in the region and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 2 on page 69.



“ I promised to do anything I could bring the Sky Blues home to the Ricoh. Brokering the deal to do just that shows the convening power of the Mayor ”

HELPING THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
"Address rough sleeping in our towns and cities"	Oversaw a reduction in the rough sleeper count by 67% compared to the year before I was elected Mayor , decreasing from a peak of 169 people in 2018 down to 44 this year.	
"Trial a Housing First service with intensive support"	Provided accommodation for 377 people who are rough sleepers or at risk of homelessness through our Housing First scheme , after securing nearly £10 million from Government to set the scheme up in the West Midlands.	
"Tackle mental health problems"	Helped over 600 people with mental health issues back into work through the Thrive into Work scheme , rolled out the Thrive at Work mental health training programme to over 400 organisations, and trained 43,000 people in the West Midlands in mental health first aid .	
"Support the NHS in any way possible"	Championed bids for more funding for the region's NHS , including £97 million for the new ACAD centre at Heartlands, £36 million for the A&E at Walsall Manor Hospital, and getting the construction of the new Midlands Met Hospital in Sandwell going again after the collapse of Carillion. Supported the NHS throughout the COVID-19 pandemic .	
"Support the work of social enterprises and charities"	Set up the West Midlands Social Economy Taskforce to work on how we can increase the strength of the sector, brought charities into the decision-making of the Combined Authority , for example including St. Basil's, Crisis and Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid on the Homelessness Taskforce. Set up a Community Support Hub website during COVID-19 to allow residents to find all the charities and community groups offering support, and agreed a new Social Value Policy to encourage the use of charities and social enterprises when procuring services in the region, securing over £2.7 million in social value commitments through contracts procured.	

KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Expand our work to “design out” homelessness

Secure further funding to expand the successful Housing First scheme, build thousands more affordable homes for rent and to buy, explore whether a ‘Commitment to Collaborate’ between councils, the NHS, Jobcentres could **develop into a new form of integrated case management**.



Get a grip of the serious mental health issues in the region

Develop new projects to support people whose mental health has been particularly affected by lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic, and grow our successful Thrive into Work and Thrive at Work schemes, and increase the number of trained mental health first aiders in the region. **Create specific efforts focused on BME communities who are affected by poor mental health**, as part of the region’s successful Thrive mental health programme, and **kick off a new programme of activity to help parents and children deal with the challenges of young people’s mental health**, particularly the links to social media usage, eating disorders and self-harm.



Tackle the health inequalities between different communities

Implement the recommendations in the West Midlands Health of the Region report, which are practical steps to tackle some of the poor health in the region, particularly amongst BME communities, **develop new health screening centres in locations that are convenient for people to get to, support our NHS Trusts win their plans to create new types of digital healthcare and secure funding from Government for a West Midlands Radical Health Prevention Fund to provide investment funding**.



Double the size of our entrepreneurial social enterprise sector

Provide more financial support, advice, mentoring and training to charities and social enterprises, and **continue to partner with charities and social enterprises to deliver the Combined Authority’s most important priorities**,



DESIGNING OUT HOMELESSNESS

In 2017, before I was elected as Mayor, rough sleeping was an issue which came up again and again as something people in the West Midlands felt very strongly about. **I committed that this would be a priority for me as Mayor, because it was completely unacceptable and shamed us as a region.** The very first week after the election, we convened the West Midlands Homelessness Taskforce to get to grips with the issue in the region.

Our approach has been to 'design out' homelessness: to ensure that the system works to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place, and to give them support if they do become homeless. **I'm pleased to say that there has been substantial progress in helping homeless people in the West Midlands. It has been achieved by working as a team: councils, charities, the Combined Authority and Government working together.** I want to pay tribute to all the work that councillors, council officers and charities have done over the last four years. The situation has improved substantially, but there are still people who need our help. **That's why we need to continue our work together through our superb Taskforce of charities, businesses and council officers, and our Members Advisory Group, to design out homelessness in the West Midlands.**

Progress made:

- **Oversaw a reduction in the rough sleeper count by 67% compared to the year before I was elected Mayor, decreasing from a peak of 169 in 2018 down to 44 across the West Midlands, the lowest number in the last decade.**
- **Provided accommodation for 377 people who are rough sleepers or at risk of homelessness through our Housing First scheme with intensive 'wraparound' support to help them with addiction problems or mental health issues,** after securing nearly £10 million from Government to set the scheme up in the West Midlands.
- **Founded Change Into Action, the alternative giving scheme which ensures that all the public's donations are used by local expert teams to help the homeless, which has so far raised over £160,000,** helping over 400 people in Birmingham alone. The scheme has been rolled out to Birmingham, Coventry, Walsall, Sandwell and Solihull, with Wolverhampton having its own scheme.
- **Launched the West Midlands Homelessness Taskforce, bringing together the public, private and charity sector organisations** to 'design out' homelessness.
- **Offered over 5,000 free bus passes to homeless people** who needed to travel to get medical help or to get to an appointment for emergency housing, hostel accommodation or a job interview, working with bus operator National Express.
- **Appointed a specialist veterans advisor and created a dedicated fund with the Royal British Legion to help veterans at risk of homelessness** to pay for vital items such as a deposit for accommodation or first month's rent, travel passes to find work, and basic furnishings.
- **Secured £1.75 million funding specifically to build 25 new homes for homeless people helped off the street during the Coronavirus pandemic,** as part of the Government's Next Steps Accommodation programme.
- **Developed a new definition of 'affordable housing' based on how much people actually earn in the region** (for example if they are an NHS cleaner, a teaching assistant, a nurse or a Police Community Safety Officer), rather than just based on rents or house prices.
- **Required all housing schemes that are given Combined Authority funding to make sure at least 20% of the homes built are affordable,** according to our new West Midlands definition, and **agreed a deal with Housing Associations in the West Midlands to build thousands of new affordable homes** in the region over the next ten years.
- **Agreed a co-ordinated 'Winter Plan' with councils across the West Midlands each winter,** to make sure that vulnerable people are kept safe during severe weather.
- **Developed the Designing Out Homelessness Business Toolkit** to help businesses understand what practical steps they can take to prevent their employees becoming homeless, and help people who are homeless get back into work.

- **Successfully campaigned for the Government to make changes to the benefits system** to help those at risk of homelessness, for example by calling for an end to the freeze of housing benefits, calling for 18-21 year olds to remain eligible for housing benefit, and making it clear that “the cuts have gone far enough”.
- **Supported the work of the brilliant charities and faith organisations in the region** like St. Basil’s, YMCA, Tabor House, Homeless One and Langar Aid, creating the Faith and Homelessness Guide to explain how faith groups can contribute to the overall plan.
- **Backed the Government’s ‘Everybody In’ campaign, providing accommodation to over 800 people across the West Midlands**, which, combined with the ban on evictions and the £20 per week boost to Universal Credit, was decisive in helping people during the pandemic.



Our Housing First project gives people like Jeff in Walsall a home and the support they need to get their lives back on track

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Secure further funding to expand the successful Housing First scheme**, and explore 'Live and Work' models that would provide jobs for homeless people as well as accommodation.
- Work with the Government to **make sure that the people helped during the pandemic do not end up returning to homelessness**, through the Next Steps Accommodation programme.
- **Build thousands more affordable homes for rent and to buy**, using Government funding to help councils and housing associations to clean up derelict sites and build new homes, expanding the existing WMCA work on Affordable Housing Partnerships with housing associations.
- **Secure an Affordable Housing Deal with Government to bring hundreds of millions of pounds into the region to build new affordable homes.**
- **Explore whether a 'Commitment to Collaborate' between councils, the NHS, Jobcentres could develop into a new form of integrated case management**, where a full team of specialists gives each person exactly the right support for them, and shares information to make sure they don't fall through the gaps between services.
- **Work with councils to tackle poor standards in 'exempt accommodation' in the West Midlands**, including exploring the introduction of a new licensing regime for landlords, the effect of out of area placements, and support following prison discharges.
- **Work with Government to secure the continuous review of the rate of Local Housing Allowance part of Universal Credit to ensure that people can afford to rent a decent home**, stopping people getting into rent arrears and being forced onto the streets in the first place.
- **Continue to support our brilliant homeless charities and faith groups in their work to tackle homelessness**, and develop further specialist support for veterans at risk of homelessness.
- **Build awareness amongst the public as they come back to work in our town and city centres of how they can help**, particularly through promotion of our Change into Action giving scheme, and **work with businesses in the region to set up 'hardship funds'** to help their own employees who might be at risk of homelessness, and promote the BITC business toolkit.
- **Work with charities in the region like Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid to explore what further support or funding they need from Government to support victims of domestic violence** who are at risk of homelessness, and **explore the links between exploitation, modern slavery, and homelessness**, particularly for young people.
- **Work with the Government on new ways to support those people who are designated as 'No Recourse to Public Funds'**, so that people such as asylum seekers or dependents of those with settled status don't end up sleeping rough.
- **Continue to support councils as they use the Government's Rough Sleeper Initiative funding** to tackle the needs in their local areas.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Mental health issues affect many hundreds of thousands of people in the West Midlands, and have a huge impact on their lives and the lives of those around them. Often people can't or don't get the help that they need. This is an issue where there is a clear case for action, but it is complex and requires different organisations working together, with real expertise and clinical knowledge. The Combined Authority has stepped into this space, using its ability to convene the different players, taking a 'whole system' approach to the challenge.

Our pioneering West Midlands Mental Health Commission made a great start in 2017, setting a clear action plan for the region, and the Thrive team at the Combined Authority has been entrepreneurial and incredibly hardworking in securing funding and working with partners to drive action over the last three years. You can see below the progress we have made as region. **It's time to regroup, see how the situation has changed following the Coronavirus pandemic, and ready ourselves for an even more ambitious three years.** That's how we can best make a difference to the lives of all those affected by mental health issues in the West Midlands.

Progress made:

- **Helped over 600 people with mental health issues back into work through the Thrive into Work scheme,** which provided one-to-one support to help people overcome their barriers, and extended the project to July 2021 to support people through the pandemic.
- **Developed the Thrive at Work accreditation programme** to help workplaces support people with mental health issues, and rolled it out to over 400 organisations so far, and **trialled the Wellbeing Premium Programme, which provided a financial incentive to employers to improve the health and wellbeing of their staff.**
- **Trained 43,000 people in the West Midlands in mental health first aid.**
- **Created Thrive at Home to provide advice and resources to help people with their mental health while working at home during the pandemic,** working with the Midlands Engine.
- **Backed the NHS Every Mind Matters campaign,** to support people by developing their own mental health plan, which has had over 160,000 subscribers in the region so far.
- **Supported the Thrive Mental Health Awards to celebrate the people, teams or organisations who have made a significant contribution** to improving mental health in their area.
- **Promoted the This is Me campaign to end the stigma around mental health** by encouraging employees to share their mental health stories and helping companies to be inclusive.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Reconvene the West Midlands Mental Health Commission to agree new priorities,** and secure new funding to expand our work in the region.
- **Develop new projects to support people whose mental health has been particularly affected by lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic, and grow our successful Thrive into Work and Thrive at Work schemes,** and increase the number of trained mental health first aiders in the region.
- **Create specific efforts focused on BME communities who are affected by poor mental health,** as part of the region's successful Thrive mental health programme.
- **Continue to trial new approaches to helping people with mental health needs in the criminal justice system or at risk of homelessness.**
- **Kick off a new programme of activity to help parents and children deal with the challenges of young people's mental health,** particularly the links to social media usage, eating disorders and self-harm.

TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

During the last year, we have suffered a once in a generation health catastrophe: the COVID-19 pandemic. **The region has come together to get through the pandemic, and in particular we must thank all those in the NHS and broader healthcare system for providing care to all those affected by the virus, with commitment, compassion, bravery, and self-sacrifice.** But now that the vaccination programme is underway and lockdown rules are being lifted, we must not ignore some of the underlying issues the pandemic has revealed.

It was clear that the pandemic hit some communities harder than others, in part due to significant long-standing inequalities in physical and mental health. The West Midlands came together to examine these issues in 2020 in our Health of the Region report. This report and action plan will form the basis for urgent and intensive work to tackle these inequalities, in particular work looking at preventing people developing health conditions in the first place, **so that everyone in the West Midlands can live happier, healthier lives.**

Progress made:

- **Championed bids for more funding for the region's NHS**, including £97 million for the new ACAD centre at Heartlands, £36 million for the A&E at Walsall Manor Hospital, and getting the construction of the new Midlands Met Hospital in Sandwell going again after the collapse of Carillion.
- **Supported the NHS throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to secure Government support for the region** in a timely manner by speaking directly to the Health Minister, for example on ventilators and vaccine supplies.
- **Set up the 'Health of the Region 2020' inquiry into the health inequalities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic**, to understand why different groups are affected more severely, and what we should do about it as a region.
- **Trialled new medical technologies such as using 5G in ambulances to do remote-controlled ultrasound scans**, and in care homes so that doctors can assess patients remotely as part of the West Midlands 5G programme.
- **Agreed the West Midlands 'On the Move' strategy and kicked off the first actions, such as the Goodgym project** which gets people to do good deeds while being physically active.
- **Backed the regional Include Me WM programme to support making sport and physical activity more accessible to people with disabilities.**
- **Set up a pilot social prescribing scheme to prescribe outdoor activities for people with health conditions** in the Black Country, and **set up community sports initiatives to encourage people to keep active** like the Mayor's inter-generational Cricket Cup and a project with the Edgbaston Foundation to give away cricket bats and kit to disadvantaged young people.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Implement the recommendations in the West Midlands Health of the Region report**, which are practical steps to tackle some of the poor health in the region, particularly amongst BME communities, working with community groups, councils and the NHS.
- **Continue to support the NHS in the region**, and work more closely with the management to improve the quality of healthcare in every area, and **develop new health screening centres in locations that are convenient for people to get to**, for example, secure funding for scanning equipment in New Street Station, building on the trial in 2020.
- **Strengthen the programme of community sports in the region**, particularly in the period after the Commonwealth Games, by supporting local clubs and organisations like Sport Birmingham.
- **Open the Birmingham Health Innovation Campus in Selly Oak and Edgbaston**, and work with the West Midlands Growth Company to lead a campaign to bring biotech companies to occupy the new facilities, with a particular focus on reshoring of production following the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Champion the plans to **create a new hospital with a life sciences and health innovation campus around the UK Central Hub and High Speed 2 Interchange station in Solihull**.
- **Support our NHS Trusts win their plans to create new types of digital healthcare**, such as The Royal Wolverhampton's partnership with Babylon 'digital first' model, University Hospitals Birmingham's work with BT on 5G and remote diagnostics, and University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire's work on digital pathology and electronic maternity health records.
- **Make the most of the fantastic new Midlands Metropolitan Hospital in Smethwick that is set to open in 2022**, and work to provide easy transport links and local housing for key workers on sites such as Abberley Street and Cranford Way.
- Build on the work of the West Midlands Academic Health Science Network to bring together NHS clinicians, academic researchers, industry partners, digital entrepreneurs and investors to **take new healthcare technologies from trials through to mass use across the region**.
- **Secure funding from Government for a West Midlands Radical Health Prevention Fund to provide investment funding and the backing of Government to these plans**, focusing on stopping people developing ill-health in the first place.
- **Work with universities, colleges and NHS Trusts in the region to develop a joint health skills roadmap** to ensure that we are training our young people for the jobs needed in the future in the health and life sciences sector, making the most of the Government's additional funding for new nurses and other NHS staff.
- **Develop plans for a West Midlands COVID-19 memorial**, to remember all those who sadly died during the pandemic, including some form of long-lasting tribute which will improve healthcare in the region on an ongoing basis, for example new medical or community facilities, or training opportunities for young people.



“ “ The pandemic has demonstrated some of the underlying health inequalities in the region we need to address ” ”

HEALTH OF THE REGION 2020: KEY FINDINGS

After comprehensive analysis of the evidence on people's health before and during the Coronavirus pandemic, working with the NHS and Public Health England, the report found:

- **People in the West Midlands spend more of their lives in poor health, and life expectancy is lower**, than is true for people in England overall.
- **Local rates of premature deaths from preventable causes (like heart disease, lung disease and cancer) are also higher than the national rates**, caused in part by drinking, childhood and adult obesity and lower rates of physical activity and early health screening.
- **People living in more deprived areas of the West Midlands, particularly those in BME groups, had the highest rates of COVID-19 related deaths.**
- **During COVID-19 lockdowns, there were significant negative effects on people's wellbeing and mental health** with more people feeling lonely and anxious.
- **All of these health impacts are linked to deprivation overall**, and tackling them will require the region to look at jobs, transport, housing, skills and other policy areas, rather than just focusing on health.

After analysing all the data about health inequalities in the West Midlands, the Health of the Region report sets out an action plan, including over 50 commitments to actions to tackle these challenges, including:

- **Focused initiatives to improve the health of BME communities**, for example exploring screening in community centres and places of worship, providing more public health education with better communications, and developing a Thrive mental health project specifically to support BME communities.
- **Tackle the wider causes of poor health**, by looking at housing, transport, access to green space, jobs and skills provision in deprived areas, and launching targeted initiatives to improve it.
- **Improve access to healthcare**, for example by setting up diagnostic and screening health centres in local neighbourhoods and by adopting new digital technology (e.g. seeing a GP through the Babylon app), improving access to social prescribing, developing new technologies through a new Radical Prevention Fund.
- **Make healthy lifestyles the norm**, for example by encouraging physical activity and improving access to green space.

To tackle these health inequalities will require hard work, new funding and teamwork between different partners in the region. The best response we can have to the Coronavirus pandemic is to build a healthier, happier and more resilient West Midlands for all our communities.

DEVELOP OUR HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES INDUSTRY

For more information on what Andy has done to support our cutting-edge health and life sciences business sector in the region, and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 1 on page 28.

MAKING THE WEST MIDLANDS A WORLD-CLASS SPORTING REGION

For more information on what Andy has done to encourage physical activity and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 6 on page 126.

SUPPORTING CHARITIES, VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

This year more than ever we have seen the huge contribution of organisations in the voluntary, charity and social economy sectors: from delivering food and medicine during lockdown, to supporting the NHS with testing and vaccine programmes, from providing financial support to vulnerable people, to keeping people's spirits up with art, sport and music. All of these selfless community activities happened at a time of real strain, with fears about the pandemic, and challenges to finances.

As Mayor, I have sought to work with charities, community organisations and social enterprises as respected partners in our efforts to improve the region. The expertise, motivation and resources which can be brought behind our priorities are substantial, but I also know that these organisations often need support from the public sector. I have championed the sector as Mayor, and provided what support we could to make the West Midlands a flourishing centre of community and social life in the UK. That is what I will continue to do for as long as I am Mayor.

Progress made:

- **Set up the West Midlands Social Economy Taskforce** to work on how we can increase the strength of the sector in the region, and committed to delivering the recommendations of the report.
- **Delivered many of our policy priorities through grant-making schemes to local community groups and social enterprises to enable them to work with local people**, for example through the Better Streets Community Fund, Community Recovery Innovation Challenge grants, Community Green Grants fund, and the Cultural and Creative Social Enterprise project.
- **Worked with social enterprises such as UnLtd and Collaborate CIC on the Combined Authority's top priorities** around skills for young people, and the response to COVID-19, and with organisations such as the BVSC to set up the Change into Action homelessness alternative giving scheme, and **brought charities into the decision-making of the Combined Authority**, for example including St. Basil's, Crisis and Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid on the Homelessness Taskforce.
- **Set up a Community Support Hub website during COVID-19** to allow residents to find all the charities and community groups offering support during the pandemic, and **developed a Community Recovery Roadmap**, which brought together members of the community to decide on how we can use the recovery from the COVID pandemic to strengthen our communities in the future.
- **WMCA agreed a new Social Value Policy** to encourage the use of charities and social enterprises when procuring services in the region, securing over £2.7 million in social value commitments through contracts procured.
- **Set up the Mayor's Community Weekend**, which provides small grant funding (up to £500) for local community groups to run hundreds of events to bring the community together once a year over one weekend in the West Midlands, in association with the National Lottery Community Fund.
- **Encouraged volunteering across the region**, for example Mayor's Mentors, litter picks and tree-planting, and **ran the Mayor's Community Champions awards**, to celebrate people who have made a significant contribution to the community in their local area.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Build on the superb community spirit shown by third sector organisations during the Coronavirus pandemic** and support the structures and networks that were created to help local communities to continue their work.
- **Work to double the size of the social economy in the West Midlands by 2029**, by delivering the recommendations of the Social Economy Taskforce.
- **Ensure that support for social enterprises and charities is included in our review of business support available in the West Midlands**, and find ways to provide more financial support, advice, mentoring and training to these organisations.

- **Continue to partner with charities and social enterprises to deliver the Combined Authority's most important priorities**, through grant-making schemes, challenges and, where possible, long-term sustainable funding, and retain a strong representation of charity and community leaders in the leadership of the Combined Authority's Taskforces, Groups and Commissions.
- **Explore proposals for new types of social finance products**, such as a revolving loan fund or a 'Community Bond', which the Combined Authority could use to support organisations in the region, and **campaign to win further financial support for the voluntary and charity sector** to help with community recovery after the COVID pandemic.
- **Increase the social value (such as jobs created or apprenticeships provided) realised through the WMCA Social Value Policy** as investment in transport and housing capital programmes ramps up over the next three years.
- **Supercharge volunteering across the region**, particularly through the Great West Midlands Clean Up ahead of the Commonwealth Games, and during the Commonwealth Games itself, to make sure all our visitors get a superb West Midlands welcome.



“

Communities have come together to help each other during the Coronavirus pandemic.

”

MAKING SURE EVERYONE SHARES IN THE REGION'S SUCCESS

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
"Make sure older people have the support they need"	Protected the free bus pass for pensioners , saved the West Midlands Ring & Ride service from collapse, and supported small-scale schemes to tackle loneliness amongst older people, such as the Chatty Cafe scheme and the GoodGym scheme.	
"Ensure women share in the success of the region"	Created targeted skills training options specifically for women , including new digital coding courses such as the Women in Software Academy, Construction Hubs and the Connecting Communities programme, and provided financial support to help women who are at risk of dropping out of courses because of their need for childcare.	
"Champion inter-faith initiatives to bring different religious groups together"	Brought leaders from West Midlands faith communities to agree the Mayor and Faith Action Plan , championed and celebrated religious festivals and stood up for faith communities after instances of hate crime.	
"Make sure people from all communities are included and shown respect"	Set up the West Midlands Leadership Commission to improve the representation of all communities in senior positions in West Midlands organisations, created targeted skills training options specifically for BME young people and ran a series of jobs and training fairs in community locations.	
"Make sure that everyone here respects and values everyone else"	Ran anti-hate crime campaigns across the public transport network , and have been a vocal champion of the LGBT+ community , speaking out against the homophobic protests at Anderton Park School and Parkfield Academy to stand up for the right of schools to teach equalities to all children.	
"Give those with disabilities the opportunity to get a job"	Ran targeted skills and employment programmes such as the Employment Support Pilot and the Individual Placement and Support programme , which work with disabled people to help overcome their barriers to finding work and improve their pay once in work.	

KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Set up an Equalities Taskforce to make sure all communities share in the region's success

Set up an Equalities Taskforce, with representatives of all communities, which will look at the specific issues facing under-represented communities, in Combined Authority policy areas like transport, skills, jobs and housing. **Take action on improving diversity in leadership especially on boards in the region,** through the refreshed Leadership Commission during the next Mayoral term.



Supporting the women of the West Midlands

Support women back into work after the disproportionate impact of the pandemic, by creating more flexible training options for women, particular those returning to the job market after having children, such as Night School with flexible timings, part-time options, transport options and childcare support, and **run specific careers schemes to encourage young women into STEM careers where they are under-represented,** working with engineering, construction and car companies in the region.



Back our region's thriving faith communities

Work with faith leaders through the Faith Strategic Partnership on how they can be partners in the Combined Authority's work, for example helping young people find career opportunities, or hosting other public services, such as health screening, following the superb efforts of mosques, temples and churches in the region in hosting COVID-19 testing and vaccination centres.



GIVING OLDER PEOPLE THE SUPPORT THEY NEED

With an aging population, it is critically important to the region that we value and respect the older generation in the West Midlands. This year the Coronavirus pandemic has been particularly difficult for older people due to the long periods of isolation, worries about the disease and the loss of friends and family members. In our region's recovery, **we must work harder than ever to improve quality of life for older people, and make the West Midlands the best place to live whatever age you are.**

Progress made:

- **Protected the free bus pass for pensioners, and lifted peak time restrictions on bus passes to allow older people to travel for their Coronavirus vaccine appointments.**
- **Saved from collapse the West Midlands Ring & Ride service,** which provides over 800,000 journeys per year to people who are unable to use the public transport network.
- **Improved accessibility for older people on public transport,** such as rolling out new buses and improved trains with easier boarding and audio visual announcements on buses so people can see and hear their next stop, and improving access at rail stations.
- **Set up the West Midlands Community Support Hub during the coronavirus pandemic to match up community, faith and charity groups with local residents who needed help** while they were isolating.
- **Supported small-scale schemes to tackle loneliness amongst older people, such as the Chatty Cafe scheme,** which provides a safe space for them to have conversations in local cafes and restaurants, and **the GoodGym scheme in which runners can help older people in the region by doing small errands and welfare visits.**
- **Trialled new medical technologies such as the using 5G in care homes** so that doctors can assess patients remotely as part of the West Midlands 5G programme.
- **Set up the Warmer Homes West Midlands Programme,** with around £1 million of funding from the Energy Redress Scheme to help more than 7,000 homes with fuel poverty and energy efficiency measures, using a team of outreach workers across the West Midlands.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Make sure that buses, trains and the Metro are as accessible as possible to older people, protect the free bus pass, and improve the Ring & Ride accessibility services for people who need it, exploring new options like 'on demand' services.**
- **Launch a huge programme of installation of energy efficiency measures such as new insulation, double glazing and new boilers in people's homes** to reduce fuel bills and carbon emissions, focusing on the people who need it most such as older people in the region, building on £2 million Neighbourhood Demonstrator already funded by the Combined Authority.
- **Develop our innovative work on 5G and healthcare, and explore setting up digital health screening hubs in high footfall local locations** to help older people access healthcare without having to travel to a hospital or a GP's practice for each appointment.
- Make sure the West Midlands remains a great place to live in by **supporting our High Streets and cultural organisations.**

ENSURING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE GET THE BEST START TO LIFE

For more information on what Andy has done to help young people, and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 3 on page 76.

“ We must make the West Midlands the best place to live whatever age you are ”



SUPPORTING THE WOMEN OF THE WEST MIDLANDS

For the West Midlands to be successful, the women of the region need to be successful. Whether it is providing young women with the skills to get into work, helping people to return to the workplace after starting a family, or making sure there are no barriers to reaching senior positions in their organisations, there is so much we can do to champion women in the region.

Progress made:

- **Set up the West Midlands Leadership Commission to understand and improve the representation of all communities** in senior positions in West Midlands organisations, and **launched and promoted the 'Inclusive Leadership Pledge'** which commits business leaders across the region to reduce the gender pay gap in their own businesses.
- **Created targeted skills training options specifically for women**, including new digital coding courses such as the Women in Software Academy, Construction Hubs training schemes, and the Connecting Communities programme, which helps low-paid part-time workers to increase their hours and earnings.
- **Rolled out new flexi-tickets on public transport, giving discounts to those people who work part-time and do not require a full five-day per week season ticket**, which will benefit women, more of whom work part-time and more of whom use public transport.
- **Committed as Mayor not to speak on all-make panels**, instead encouraging organisers to find suitable speakers amongst the talented women in the region.
- **Appointed an executive leadership team at the West Midlands Combined Authority with over 50% women**, providing senior role models for women throughout the organisation, with the Combined Authority working through an action plan to reach 40% female senior managers by 2024, and to become a gender-balanced organisation shortly afterwards.
- **Supported efforts to bring more female candidates into politics**, with new Conservative MPs in the region including Suzanne Webb in Stourbridge, Jane Stevenson in Wolverhampton and Nicola Richards in West Bromwich.
- **Championed the successful Commonwealth Games bid for Birmingham in 2022, which will be the first major multi-sports games with more medals for women than for men.**

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Support women back into work after the disproportionate impact of the pandemic, by creating more flexible training options for women, particular those returning to the job market after having children**, such as Night School with flexible timings, part-time options, transport options and childcare support.
- **Review the funding for childcare support in the Adult Education Budget to help eliminate barriers to women taking part in skills training.**
- **Promote 'Inclusive Leadership Pledge'** which commits business leaders to reduce the gender pay gap and to support women in their career progression, to even more businesses in the region.
- **Run specific careers schemes to encourage young women into STEM careers where they are under-represented**, working with engineering, construction and car companies in the region.
- **Step up the work of the Children, Families and Young People Task Group within the Homelessness Taskforce to reduce the number of households experiencing homelessness** in the West Midlands.
- **Work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to tackle domestic violence and abuse** against women in the region.
- **Review, with Council Leaders, the Combined Authority structures to increase the number of female and BME representatives on the Board**, and on all Combined Authority decision-making bodies.
- **Continue cross-party work to increase the number of women elected as MPs and Councillors in the West Midlands.**

- Explore how new patterns of working after the pandemic, like increased flexible working between home and a business, could make more job opportunities accessible to women.
- As part of our Thrive mental health programme, explore new ideas for how to help young women and girls with mental health problems, particularly those related to social media use.



“For the West Midlands to succeed, the women of the West Midlands must succeed”

BACKING OUR REGION'S THRIVING FAITH COMMUNITIES

We are blessed in the West Midlands to have many people of faith who make a huge contribution to the region. Whether it is by supporting members of their own faith community through difficult times, or through their good works for others in the wider community, the acts of selflessness I have seen have made me proud to be Mayor of our region.

This contribution was most clearly displayed during Coronavirus pandemic, with faith groups supporting people isolating at home with food, medical supplies and company, Langar Aid providing hot meals to lorry drivers stranded in Kent, and vaccination centres at places of worship like the Brierley Hill Methodist Church, St. Francis' Church in Wren's Nest, the Clifton Road Mosque, the Balaji Temple and many more examples. Groups have not just been helping their own communities, but have been working together and helping other faith groups out in their local areas. **As Mayor I have sought to bring faith groups into our work as trusted partners, and over the next three years I have ambitious plans for continuing our work together.**

Progress made:

- **Brought leaders from West Midlands faith communities** to agree **the Mayor and Faith Action Plan**, which committed to work together on four West Midlands priorities: the economy, homelessness, leadership and hate crime through the Mayor's Faith Leaders' Conference, the Faith Steering Group and setting up the Faith Strategic Partnership.
- **Provided support and advice for faith groups on how they could most effectively support the region's homelessness efforts.**
- **Made faith groups a critical part of our region's COVID-19 response,** running a series of regular virtual briefing sessions, with over 250 faith leaders taking part.
- **Championed and celebrated religious festivals** by hosting a series of civic events such as Diwali on the Square, receptions for Eid, Vaisakhi and Holi, Christmas celebrations as well as hosting virtual events during the Coronavirus pandemic.
- **Stood up for faith communities after instances of hate crime,** supported regional bids into the Government's Places of Worship security funding scheme, and **ran anti-hate crime campaigns across the public transport network,** working with West Midlands Police and charities like TellMAMA and CST.
- **Took a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination at the Combined Authority,** including adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-semitism.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Strengthen the Faith Strategic Partnership, and deepen engagement with faith groups, beyond the existing structures,** for example by holding frequent meetings with cross-denominational groups of Christian leaders, and their equivalents in the Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Jewish communities.
- **Set up a new Youth Faith Partnership** to identify and mentor emerging leaders in faith communities and involve them in regional decision-making.
- **Focus in particular on how the Mayor can work with faith groups to help young people find career opportunities,** for example by training members of faith groups to act as Mayor's Mentors or by running job fairs in churches, mosques, temples or other places of worship, and working with **black churches in the West Midlands to provide job opportunities for young people and to improve health in their local communities.**
- **Explore whether there are other public services, such as health screening, that could operate in partnership with faith groups,** following the superb efforts of mosques, temples and churches in the region in hosting COVID-19 testing and vaccination centres, to tackle the health inequalities revealed in the Health of the Region report.
- **Continue to recognise and support the excellent work done by faith voluntary organisations** that are tackling some of the region's challenges like homelessness and poverty, such as Homeless One, Langar Aid, Tabor House and many others.

- **Expand the Mayor's regional celebrations of religious festivals as we come out of lockdown, holding them all around the region** and inviting as many people from faith groups as possible, and commemorate days of remembrance for events such as the Holocaust and Srebrenica.
- **Stand up to religious hatred, for example by running further anti-hate crime campaigns on the public transport network, and finding more opportunities to celebrate positive stories of people of faith**, for example by showcasing service to the community, or career achievements.
- **Commission a feasibility study on the development of a Museum of World Religions in the West Midlands**, to be a major tourist attraction and an educational facility to help young people in the region learn about religion.



Speaking at Diwali on the Square which brought celebrations right into heart of the region

MAKING SURE ALL OUR REGION'S COMMUNITIES SHARE IN OUR SUCCESS

Our diversity is a huge advantage for the region, with the potential to foster creativity, entrepreneurship, and build on our strong links with countries all around the world. But to do that, it is hugely important to me that all communities in the West Midlands share in the economic success of the region.

That means that young people from all backgrounds can get ahead if they work hard at school, college and university. That means that the leadership of firms and organisations here needs to reflect the people who live here. That means a Mayor who is willing to listen and work together with community groups from all across the region. **Making sure that everyone has a fair chance to access these opportunities is what will make us a successful city-region in the years ahead.**

Progress made:

- **Set up the West Midlands Leadership Commission** to understand and improve the representation of all communities in senior positions in West Midlands organisations, **creating the Inclusive Leadership Pledge for businesses** to commit to improving diversity in the leadership of their organisations.
- **Set up the Combined Authority's work on supporting communities in the region as a dedicated portfolio of work**, with a senior leader appointed to drive progress.
- **Ran a series of jobs and training fairs in community locations** such as at the Legacy Centre of Excellence in Newtown, Maitland Hall in Washwood Heath, Brier Fair in Brierley Hill, SHAPE Youth Festival in Sandwell, and the Whitehall Centre in Caldmore, and **through our #WMStrong campaign, worked with youth outreach workers from First Class Legacy to put on careers training and other activities for young people.**
- **Created targeted skills training options tailored for BME young people**, including new digital coding courses such as: Niyu running a mobile app development course for black women, Fircroft College running a bootcamp and digital cafe focused on BME people, Code your Future training adults in coding focussed on the refugee community, and Brit Asia TV supporting low-wage BME people with digital media skills.
- **Dedicated around £11 million per year funding from the Adult Education Budget to provide English language teaching to those who need it**, making courses free for those on low incomes, and commissioned a review on English for Speakers of Other Languages teaching in the region to make sure it is high quality and reaching those who need it most.
- **Commissioned an urgent "Health of the Region" inquiry into why COVID-19 disproportionately affected the region's BME communities**, and agreed an action plan with the local NHS to tackle the underlying health problems.
- **Supported efforts to bring more BME candidates into politics** by training and encouraging candidates for Parliament and councils, with Saqib Bhatti being elected as the new Conservative MP in Meriden, and Jay Singh-Sohal as Conservative candidate for Police and Crime Commissioner.
- **Stood up to intolerance in the region, by running anti-hate crime campaigns across the public transport network**, working with West Midlands Police and charities like TellMAMA and CST.
- **Championed the fundraising campaign for a new National Caribbean Monument at the National Memorial Arboretum** to honour the men and women who served and lost their lives fighting in the armed forces.
- **Backed community cricket initiatives to help young people, particularly from BME communities, to get into the sport**, with Warwickshire Cricket Club, including giving out over 1,000 cricket bats for community sports activities, and became a patron of the South Asian Cricket Association to increase representation of British Asian in elite cricket in the UK.
- **Conducted a full race pay audit at the Combined Authority**, checking that white British employees are not paid more than BME employees for the same job, **adopted the Reporting Action Composition Education code** to help ensure senior leadership roles reflect the diversity

of the region, and worked to improve recruitment processes by introducing blind applications, representative panels and feedback for unsuccessful candidates.

- **Appointed a Young Combined Authority representing the diversity of the region to be a part of Combined Authority decision-making, and to advise in particular on the issues affecting young people** in the West Midlands.
- **Set up the Inclusive Growth Unit to ensure everyone in the region benefits from the work of the Combined Authority, and set a requirement that every report that goes for a decision at any Combined Authority Board takes into account the Equalities and Inclusive Growth Implications** of the decision.
- **Worked to raise the profile of BME media and creative businesses in the region**, for example by securing the full relocation of BBC Asian Network to Birmingham.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Set up an Equalities Taskforce, with representatives of all communities, which will look at the specific issues facing under-represented communities**, in Combined Authority policy areas like transport, skills, jobs and housing.
- **Implement the recommendations in the West Midlands Health of the Region report**, which are practical steps to tackle some of the poor health in the region, particularly amongst BME communities, working with community groups, councils and the NHS.
- **Take action on improving diversity in leadership especially on boards in the region**, through the refreshed Leadership Commission during the next Mayoral term.
- **Tackle hate crime, working collaboratively with the Police and Crime Commissioner on stronger enforcement and better reporting, and provide funding for anti-hate crime organisations such as TellMAMA.**
- Develop more **targeted skills training options for BME young people**, particularly in digital, creative, professional services and entrepreneurship.
- **Set up a new work experience access campaign** to make sure the placements are available to people from all communities in the region, not just those with money or family connections, **working with exciting social mobility initiatives such as #10000BlackInterns**, and providing paid opportunities in the Combined Authority.
- **Support BME entrepreneurs in the West Midlands in starting up and growing their businesses and social enterprises**, and look to develop a new programme to provide mentoring, business support and financial support, working with the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship at Aston Business School.
- **Create specific efforts focused on BME communities who are affected by poor mental health**, as part of the region's successful Thrive mental health programme.
- **Ensure that all communities benefit from the jobs and training opportunities during the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022**, and get the chance to go to events and meet athletes, particularly from Commonwealth countries that have strong links with the West Midlands.
- **Examine the access to public transport provision for all areas of the West Midlands**, looking at whether there are particular ethnic minority groups who have less access to public transport because of where they live, and developing new transport schemes to improve access.
- **Champion the needs of business sectors in BME communities which employ large numbers of people, for example private hire drivers, restaurants, high street shops, security, pharmacies**, in particular to help them bounce back after Coronavirus lockdowns.

STANDING UP FOR THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY

There is no place for intolerance in the West Midlands, and I have been determined as Mayor to call out those who do not respect our open, inclusive and diverse region. While some politicians stood aside, I was clear that the shocking and unacceptable homophobic behaviour outside Anderton Park School and Parkfield Academy had to stop, and I have been a supporter of our flourishing LGBT+ community. But we can't take the progress that has been made for granted. **I will always be a Mayor who stands up for the principle of equal respect for every individual and community here in the West Midlands.**

Progress made:

- **Been a vocal champion of the LGBT+ community**, opening Birmingham Pride, and supporting the event visibly with rainbow colours on bus stops around the city.
- **Spoke out against the homophobic protests outside Anderton Park School and Parkfield Academy** to stand up for the right of schools to teach equalities to all children, and presented the Pink News Role Model Award to Andrew Moffatt, the teacher who created the No Outsiders programme.
- **Ran anti-hate crime campaigns across the public transport network**, working with West Midlands Police and charities like True Vision.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Always stand up for equality in the region and speak up against all forms of intolerance against the LGBT+ community.**
- **Continue my support for celebration events such as Wolves Pride, Walsall Pride, Coventry Pride and Birmingham Pride** as Mayor.
- **Expand our anti-hate crime campaigns on public transport**, and encourage the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide more support for victims of hate crime through the Victims Fund.
- **Support the campaign to make sure the Gay Village in Southside in Birmingham does not lose its vibrancy and character** with the regeneration of the city, and back new public realm, lighting and security measures to support the night-time economy.



Supporting the Pride Parade in Birmingham

SUPPORTING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

We aim to be one of the best regions in the world to live in for people with disabilities or long-term health conditions. That's why we've looked at what the Combined Authority can do to help people with transport, skills and jobs, and their well-being. **Our programme, Include Me West Midlands, has brought together disabled people, disability groups, public sector agencies and researchers** to understand how we can do more to support everyone to lead happy, active and fulfilling lives in the region.

Progress made:

- **Worked to make sure the transport network is as accessible as possible for people with disabilities**, for example by training bus drivers in how to assist disabled people, rolling out improved trains with more space for wheelchairs, improving access at rail stations, and offering free travel through the Disabled Person's Pass.
- **Gave new opportunities to those with disabilities or long-term health conditions to get active**, for example through our Out on Your Loan scheme which loans adapted bikes for up to six months, funding the Wheels For All Inclusive Cycling Centre at Aldersley Stadium in Wolverhampton, and providing funding for the Midland Mencap Parkride Summer Extravaganza.
- **Ran targeted skills and employment programmes such as the Employment Support Pilot and the Individual Placement and Support programme**, which work with disabled people to help overcome their barriers to finding work and improve their pay once in work.
- **Set up the Citizens' Network to regularly engage with people with experience of disabilities** (either themselves, or of a friend or family members) to help make sure Combined Authority policies fully consider the perspective of disabled people.
- **Set up the Include Me WM pledge where organisations such as Sky Blues in the Community, Aston Villa Community Foundation, the Wasps Group and the Commonwealth Games commit to offer opportunities for disabled people in sport**, through providing facilities and activities, improving access and training staff.
- Championed the successful bid for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, which will have **the largest Para sport programme in Commonwealth Games history**.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Continue to improve the accessibility of the public transport network in the region**, in particular making sure that all of our new and refurbished rail and bus stations and Metro routes are fully accessible, and work with the local authorities to make sure that the pavements and areas around these transport links are also accessible.
- **Expand the skills and employment programmes that are working well for people with disabilities**, and continue to trial new approaches, for example, new training options for neurodiverse people particularly in coding and cybersecurity.
- **Continue to expand the Include Me WM pledge to even more West Midlands organisations, and work with them to strengthen their commitments** beyond the pledge to more actions and activities.
- **Supercharge the active well-being programmes for disabled people in the region**, particularly during and after the Commonwealth Games, and ensure that as many local disabled people as possible get to see events as possible.
- **Train more carers as part of our West Midlands joint health skills roadmap** to encourage more young people to take up the profession, making it easier for disabled people to find skilled support.

TACKLING CRIME AND ITS CAUSES

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
"Tackle anti-social behaviour on buses and trains"	Proposed tough new by-laws to allow officers to remove offenders from buses or issue fines for smoking, vaping, drunk behaviour, vandalism, playing loud music or being abusive, and increased the number of officers on the transport network.	
"Tackle the causes of crime"	Supported the successful regional bid for £4 million from Government to set up a Violence Reduction Unit to tackle knife crime, domestic violence, assaults and other violent crime in the West Midlands.	
"Providing opportunities for young people"	Trained thousands of unemployed young people to help them into jobs through our #WMStrong campaign, adult education and Connecting Communities programmes.	
"Provide the leadership needed in the fight against crime"	Campaigned for increased police funding in the West Midlands, winning commitment from the Government to provide 1,200 more police officers over the next three years.	
"Represent and speak up for the West Midlands in London"	Supported the Justice for the 21 group in their campaign for justice over the Birmingham Pub Bombings in 1974.	
"Take a zero tolerance approach to hate crime"	Ran anti-hate crime campaigns across the public transport network, working with West Midlands Police and charities like TellMAMA, True Vision and CST.	

KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Tackle crime on the public transport system

Support and continue to fund the Safer Travel Partnership, and continue our policy of tough enforcement, roll out further technology on buses, trains and Metro, and **set up the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme, which would create an additional security team with the right to issue Fixed Penalty Notice fine.**



Create opportunities for young people to stop them being drawn into crime

Champion the role of the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit and the Combined Authority's skills work to provide training and job opportunities for young people at risk of getting drawn into crime.



Support the campaign to keep local police stations open

Work with new Police & Crime Commissioner to keep community police stations open



Campaign for a public inquiry into the Birmingham Pub Bombings

Fight for an independent public inquiry into the Birmingham Pub Bombings to provide the answers that the families deserve.



With Conservative Candidate for Police & Crime Commissioner Jay Singh-Sohal at Solihull Police Station

TACKLING CRIME ON THE TRANSPORT NETWORK

Though the Mayor does not oversee West Midlands Police (unlike in Greater Manchester and in London), there are some ways in which the role can directly tackle crime. In particular on the transport network, it's crucial that people feel safe as they move around the region. **The Safer Travel Partnership between Transport for West Midlands, West Midlands Police and the British Transport Police has been effective at tackling crime and bringing offenders to justice.**

Progress made:

- **Overseen a reduction in crime on the transport network in the year before the pandemic (2019-20)**, in particular an 11% decrease in sexual offences and robberies, and further reductions in theft and criminal damage.
- **Increased the number of dedicated officers across the transport network to thirty-six**, including four additional special constables this year.
- **Championed tough new by-laws to allow officers to remove offenders from buses or issue fines** for smoking, vaping, drunk behaviour, vandalism, playing loud music or being abusive, and increased the number of officers on the transport network.
- **Increased the high-resolution CCTV coverage on bus, trains and tram services** that links back to the new Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre, so that we can identify offenders. For example, the biggest bus operator, National Express, has multiple CCTV cameras - up to 12 - on every one of its 1,600 buses, and West Midlands Metro has already trialled 5G on trams.
- **Backed the Safer Travel Partnership's programme of knife arch sweeps** at train stations and bus stops across the region.
- **Ran anti-hate crime campaigns across the public transport network**, working with West Midlands Police and charities like TellMAMA, True Vision and CST.

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Support and continue to fund the Safer Travel Partnership, and continue our policy of tough enforcement** on the transport network.
- **Roll out further technology on buses, trains and Metro**, like the recently introduced 5G technology to allow real-time CCTV and bodycam streaming back to the control centre, and explore the ethical use of artificial intelligence in identifying offenders.
- **Set up the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme, which would create an additional security team with the right to issue Fixed Penalty Notice fines for anti-social behaviour and smoking**, and the right to confiscate alcohol and take the name and address of offenders.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO STOP THEM BEING DRAWN INTO CRIME

For more information on what Andy has done to create opportunities for young people and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 3 on page 76.

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP FOR THE REGION

The role of the Mayor means stepping up and championing the needs of the region, even where it is not a formal part of the job description. Tackling crime is a good example of where West Midlands Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner are responsible for reducing crime, but where the Mayor can contribute, for example by helping to bring in more funding from the Government or by bringing different organisations in the region together.

Progress made:

- Campaigned successfully for increased police funding, **seeing a new commitment from the Government to provide 1,200 more police officers in the West Midlands over the next three years.**
- **Supported the Justice for the 21 group in their campaign for justice** over the Birmingham Pub Bombings in 1974, and secured the Home Secretary's commitment to look again at the case for a public inquiry.
- Supported West Midlands Police by arranging **funding for the training of at least 75 student officers through the Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Fund.**
- Supported the successful regional bid for £4 million from Government to **set up a Violence Reduction Unit to tackle knife crime, domestic violence, assaults and other violent crime** in the West Midlands.
- **Funded cyber security training courses and set up a cybersecurity training centre** at TechTalent Academy, Birmingham.



Remember the twenty-one people who lost their lives in the Birmingham Pub Bombings

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Continue to campaign for police stations to remain open in local communities** across the West Midlands.
- **Fight for an independent public inquiry into the Birmingham Pub Bombings** to provide the answers that the families deserve.
- **Work with the new Police & Crime Commissioner and West Midlands Police to tackle crime and the causes of crime in the region**, regardless of political party.
- **Continue to champion the role of the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit**, supporting particularly the provision of skills and job opportunities for young people at risk of getting drawn into crime.
- **Support the regional bid to Government for a new West Midlands Safe Centre facility** to provide secure care for children in custody or where ordered by a court.
- **Work with the Local Criminal Justice Board to intensify efforts to reduce re-offending in the region**, with interventions in mental health, health, housing, skills and employment.
- **Review the actions proposed in the recent Punishing Abuse report into adverse childhood experiences in the region, and see which could be implemented** by joint-working in the local public sector.
- **Take an intensive "Swap Don't Drop" approach to making sure that students do not drop out of education and training by falling through the gaps, building on the existing work**, by developing protocols and data-sharing arrangements between institutions and public-sector bodies.
- **Defend the rights of all communities to worship in peace by standing up against hate crime**, running anti-hate crime campaigns on public transport and supporting communities with applications to the Places of Worship Protective Security Fund where necessary.
- **Work with the new Police & Crime Commissioner for the duration of their term, but make the case to transfer the functions of the Police & Crime Commissioner to the Mayor and a Deputy Mayor for Policing in time for the 2024 election.** This unified model is in place in London and Greater Manchester, and would make regional efforts to prevent and tackle crime more effective.

WINNING THE BEST DEAL FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

PROMISES KEPT: 2017-2021

Commitments	Action	Kept
"Make sure the Midlands receives investment funding"	West more Brought in over £3 billion of extra funding from Government to the region since being elected in May 2017, and moved the West Midlands up the regional rankings in terms of how much Government funding we receive.	✓
"Agree second devolution deal with Government"	Secured a Second Devolution Deal, Housing Deal and Skills Deal with Government, the only region in the country to do so.	✓
Any increase in taxes will be a "last resort"	The Mayor and the Combined Authority has not charged the 'precept' additional charge on your council tax, unlike in Manchester, Liverpool and London, or any more on business rates for local businesses.	✓
"Set up a West Midlands Investment Fund"	Oversaw the creation or extension of a full range of investment funds for the region, including the Collective Investment fund, Revolving Investment Fund and the Land Fund.	✓
"Explore potential future financing initiatives"	Funded the Metro extension to Dudley and Brierley Hill using borrowing powers against future ticket sales, and funded the UK Central development using a land value capture mechanism.	✓

KEY COMMITMENTS: 2021-2024

Secure new investment with no additional burden on local residents	Secure £10 billion of new investment from Government and private investors into the region and commit to no Mayoral council tax precept for the whole of the 2021-24 term as Mayor.	➔
Seek a new Scotland / Wales-style financial settlement for the region	Press the Government for the power to retain existing taxes which are collected in the West Midlands, to be spent in the West Midlands , such as Vehicle Excise Duty, Stamp Duty and Air Passenger Duty. Win control of further Government funds to be spent improving the region , such as a long-term transport funding settlement, a dedicated West Midlands affordable housing fund, all 16-18 further education funding, all careers support funding and the West Midlands share of the Energy Company Obligation.	➔

“

I will win the financial backing the West Midlands needs from the Government

”



LANDING BILLIONS OF POUNDS OF EXTRA INVESTMENT IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

We know that to restore pride in the region and improve our transport network, build more homes and train young people, we're going to need extra investment from Government. **That's why it's so important to have a Mayor who can win new funding on our behalf.**

By using relationships with the Prime Minister, the Chancellor and senior members of the Government and by presenting credible business cases to the Government for what we need, with practical thought-through plans, we can secure more funding for the region. **It is working constructively and being practical, not just vocally criticising the Government, that achieves results.**

Progress made:

A total of over £3 billion extra funding secured for the region since being elected, including:

- **Over £650 million** for new transport infrastructure like the Metro, new rail stations, and rapid clean bus routes in the region.
- **Over £600 million for the Commonwealth Games and City of Culture.**
- **£450 million to build new homes** in the region.
- **£750 million for skills and training**, in particular for our young people and to help them into work.
- **Over £400 million** to develop new technologies and attract new jobs to the region.

Much of which was won in competitive processes against other areas of the country, like Manchester, Liverpool and London:

- Won the **Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022** bid.
- Won the **Coventry City of Culture 2021** bid.
- Won the competition to be the **UK's first 5G-enabled region.**
- Won a **new Devolution Deal, a Housing Deal and a Skills Deal** - achieved by no other region in the country.

All without costing taxpayers in the West Midlands a penny more:

- No extra council tax from the Mayor, unlike in Manchester, Liverpool and London.
- No extra business rates from the Mayor for West Midlands businesses.
- Sound financial management of the Combined Authority: four balanced budgets with no need to increase taxes.

More of our own money retained in the region:

- **Extended the successful business rates retention pilot**, where we keep business rates which are paid in the region to fund new local projects.
- **Created our Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Fund** to allow big businesses to keep their money in the region to support training in small businesses.

Using private sector knowledge and experience to make our existing funds go further:

- **Funded the Metro extension to Dudley and Brierley Hill by borrowing**, to be paid back later using the fares paid by riders when the Metro opens.
- **Developed and extended the Revolving Investment Fund and Collective Investment Funds** to provide low cost loans to build more homes and develop business premises, while making returns for local government.
- **Worked with Solihull Council and the Urban Growth Company** to create an innovative land value capture and business rate growth funding mechanism to pay for infrastructure at the UK Central site.

And attracted new funding for businesses and developments from UK and international investors:

- **West Midlands remains the top region for attracting foreign investment in businesses** outside London and the South East for the fifth year in a row with 157 projects creating and safeguarding over 6,000 new jobs in 2019/20.
- **Increase in total private investment in the West Midlands by 7%** to £2.3 billion in 2019, bucking the wider UK trend, with 58% coming from overseas.



Discussing the needs of the West Midlands with Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Secure £10 billion of new investment from Government and private investors** into the region.
- **Commit to no Mayoral council tax precept for the whole of the 2021-24 term** as Mayor.
- Seek a Government review of business rates, **commit to no business rate supplement on West Midlands businesses** in its current form, and **seek to confirm the rules which allow the West Midlands to keep all of any increase in business rates** in the region.
- **Seek a new financial settlement for the West Midlands**, with further control and more funding, like the Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish Governments, such as controlling:
 - **Long-term transport funding settlement, including Highways England, Network Rail, and Department for Transport 'retained' schemes**, building on the Transforming Cities Fund and the Intra-City Transport Settlements, **bus service operators grant (BSOG) and other DfT grants for bus investment** to allow TfWM to have more influence over the operation of the bus network, and **more control over the local rail services including control over financial flows**.
 - **A dedicated West Midlands affordable housing fund** from the Government's £12 billion Affordable Homes Programme, similar to the £4 billion London fund.
 - **All 16-18 further education funding** so that we can create a joined-up skills system which meets the needs of our key industries in the West Midlands, and **all Government funding for careers support** to help young people decide their careers.
 - **The West Midlands share of the Energy Company Obligation and other clean energy funding**, so that we can run a West Midlands programme of environmental projects to reduce fuel bills, roll out electric vehicles and get to net zero by 2041.
 - **Trade and investment funding and officials** currently in the Department for International Trade and BEIS, and move them to the region so that we have the firepower to develop our key industrial sectors.
 - **More of the money that comes from taxpayers in the West Midlands**, for example Vehicle Excise Duty, Stamp Duty and Air Passenger Duty, so that we can spend it on local projects.
 - **The West Midlands share of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund**, which will replace European structural funds, and a **regional settlement for Research & Development funding** for our priority industrial sectors in the West Midlands.
 - **A new radical health prevention fund** to find innovative new ways to help people avoid health problems.
 - **A single unified sports and cultural legacy fund** to follow on from the City of Culture and the Commonwealth Games, with Arts Council England, the National Lottery, Sport England and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

- **Develop new financial models to support the region’s top priorities**, for example:
 - **Develop a new West Midlands Co-Invest Fund**, to take stakes in regional businesses in return for cash they can invest in their businesses to grow out of the pandemic.
 - **Work with investors to create new joint ventures which would bring private sector investment in regeneration projects** into the region.
 - **Explore whether the West Midlands could encourage savers and businesses in the region to invest for the long-term in the development of the Metro** in return for tax incentives.
 - **Explore further use of Mayoral Compulsory Purchase Powers along the corridors of planned transport links** to realise land value uplift to fund the transport infrastructure.
- **Invest heavily in business case development for new West Midlands schemes at an early stage and progress these where there is no delivery funding yet available**, so that we are ready for any new Government funds that are set up, changing the Combined Authority Assurance process if necessary, and exploring whether the rules on capitalisation of business case development can be changed to reduce risk to the Combined Authority if schemes do not ultimately proceed.
- **Continue to push for changes to the Treasury’s process for allocating future central Government funding** to ensure the West Midlands gets a fair share compared to London and the South East, and work with regional partners to ensure that the updated HM Treasury Green Book process is well understood in the region.
- **Continue our work to attract UK and international investors to the region to develop new housing, infrastructure and business projects**, focused on bringing new jobs to the West Midlands.

BRINGING IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT TO THE REGION

For more information on what Andy has done to bring in trade and investment, and what he plans to do in the next three years, please see Chapter 1 on page 38.

RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION

As the Managing Director at John Lewis, I knew that customers had high expectations of every interaction with the company, and the best way to maintain excellent customer service was to maintain high standards for professional and competent behaviour throughout the organisation, and to be clear who was responsible for what. **I have taken the same approach to the running of the West Midlands Combined Authority, and I will continue to do so if re-elected as Mayor this year.**

Progress made:

- **Held regular Ask Andy public meetings in all the boroughs of the West Midlands** to meet people across the West Midlands and listen to their views, and **travelled all around the region visiting people and organisations to hear about what they do and how the Mayor can help** - shifting to virtual meetings during the pandemic.
- **Did not create a new Mayoral building, but rather used the existing Transport for West Midlands headquarters in Birmingham to ensure costs remain low.**
- **Published the Annual State of the Region report card on how the region and the West Midlands Combined Authority are performing** and set up the Office for Data Analytics to inform decision-making.
- **Appointed expert directors in charge of priority areas** such as housing, skills, attracting investment, and held them accountable for delivering at pace.
- **Took a collaborative approach to leadership: working together with councils, whatever their party colour, business organisations, charities and community groups.**
- **Set up the improved customer service operations at the Combined Authority**, meaning that everyone who writes to the Mayor will get a response to their query, and queries should be handled quickly and effectively.
- **Ran a series of Citizens' Panel to understand local people's priorities for the recovery from Coronavirus pandemic**, and **established the Youth Combined Authority to embed young people's views into the decision-making of the region.**
- **Committed to being open and transparent about meetings as Mayor with companies and interest groups and about the expenses incurred** doing the job of Mayor.
- **Worked with the other Mayors across Britain to lobby Government for more devolution and funding for our regions.**

Plan for 2021-2024:

- **Improve the way the Combined Authority consults local residents on new schemes**, using a mixture of social media, online and in-person means to find out what people think, and using real-world language that people understand instead of public sector jargon.
- **Continue the series of 'Ask Andy' open public meetings across all the boroughs of the West Midlands**, and keep doing online Ask Andys following the pandemic, so that people who can't get to an in-person event can still join them.
- **Formalise and strengthen the region's lobbying groups such as our MPs and business leaders** so that we pack a punch as the West Midlands when we need to win the case for the region, and **support the work to grow influential regional thinktanks** such as the Centre for the New Midlands and WM REDI.
- **Review how the West Midlands works with the Midlands Engine**, and simplify the system where there are overlapping responsibilities, for example in skills and business support.
- **Undertake a review of the costs of transport infrastructure projects in the region, including benchmarking national and international examples** to ensure that we are getting value for money.
- **Work with the other Metro Mayors in the UK on a cross-party basis to secure more devolution for our city-regions**, work with Mayors from across the world on global issues such as climate change, and learn from good ideas elsewhere through organisations like Bloomberg Philanthropies.

NEW TASKFORCES AND COMMISSIONS

In addition to the existing structure of the Combined Authority, and taskforces such as the West Midlands Homelessness Taskforce, Town Centres Taskforce, Leadership Commission and the Mental Health Commission, there are a number of new groups proposed in this plan:

- **Equalities** - to examine the challenges of *all* of our diverse communities, how well they are able to access and benefit from transport, skills, jobs, housing and other Combined Authority policy areas, and what to do to improve opportunities.
- **Life Chances** - to understand how the life chances of children and young people (from age zero to thirty) in the West Midlands are affected by their education, location and background, and make recommendations to improve life chances, including through improved early years provision and school performance.
- **Business Taxation** - to make recommendations on how business rates and the wider business tax system could be reformed to support West Midlands businesses.
- **Mental Health Commission** - to reconvene and plan our future work on tackling mental health issues in the West Midlands.

All of these groups will draw members representing all parts of the West Midlands, and bring in external expertise from charities, businesses and beyond.

THANK YOU TO TEAM WEST MIDLANDS

Collaboration is the only way that we will be able to restore pride in the West Midlands. It's by working together that we build a stronger region, so I wanted to record my thanks to all those who have supported the work of the Mayoralty and the Combined Authority in the last four years.

THE DEDICATED TEAM WHO HAVE WORKED ALONGSIDE ME AT THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

- All the staff at the West Midlands Combined Authority and Transport for West Midlands with whom it has been a privilege to serve these last four years. Thank you for all of your hard work and commitment to making this region truly the best in the world.
- Thank you to the staff of the Mayor's Office who have supported me directly.

LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS WHO HAVE LED THE REGION IN OUR RENAISSANCE

- All of the members of the West Midlands Combined Authority Board, particularly the Council Leaders who have taken responsibility as Portfolio Leads for different policy areas.
- All the other elected councillors from across the region who have taken part in West Midlands Combined Authority Boards, Taskforces, Members' Advisory Groups and Commissions.

WEST MIDLANDS LEADERS FROM ALL SECTORS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

- The Board Members and staff at Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Coventry and Warwickshire, and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnerships, who have led our work on economic growth.
- Chairs of West Midlands Combined Authority Taskforces, Boards and Commissions from all sectors for their dedication and brilliant leadership in tackling hugely complex challenges in the region.
- The other members of the Combined Authority Board, such as the West Midlands Fire Service, the West Midlands Fire Authority, and the Trades Union Congress for their joint working.
- The pioneering young people who form the Young Combined Authority, for their fresh perspectives, their energy and their passion.
- The Board and team of the West Midlands Growth Company for all their hard work breaking trade and investment records in the region.

THE WIDER PUBLIC SECTOR IN THE REGION WHO HAVE COLLABORATED WITH THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

- All of the council officers in the West Midlands, particularly those who have worked directly with the Combined Authority, for their collaborative working and public service.
- The brilliant teams at the education establishments in the region teaching people of all ages, including our universities, colleges, schools and training providers.
- All those who work in the NHS and healthcare in the region and the other key workers whose bravery and dedication has got us through the Coronavirus pandemic.

BUSINESS LEADERS AND WORKERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHO HAVE DRIVEN OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH

- The teams at the business representative organisations, in particular the three Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, Make UK and sector-specific groups like the Midlands Aerospace Alliance for their wise counsel on what businesses need to succeed.
- Those who have supported our efforts to attract opportunities and investment into the region, whether it is the Birmingham Commonwealth Games, Coventry City of Culture, a new film studios or High Speed 2.
- All of the people who work for firms who have helped us to deliver the Combined Authority's work on transport, housing, skills and much more!

- All those who work for transport operators in the region, particularly National Express and West Midlands Trains.

VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY, FAITH AND SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS

- Charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises in the region for your superb work to help people in the West Midlands, particularly through the challenges of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- All of the faith leaders who have participated in the faith events and inter-faith work we have run in the last four years, and the huge number of members of faith communities who do so much to help their communities.

THOSE WHO WORK IN GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT WHO HAVE BACKED OUR REGION'S RENEWAL

- All the Ministers I have worked with in Government, and in particular I'd like to thank the two Prime Ministers who have done so much to back the West Midlands: Boris Johnson and Theresa May.
- All the civil servants and special advisors who have listened to our needs as a region and worked creatively to get us the support we need.
- Our region's MPs from both parties who have campaigned tirelessly on our behalf in Parliament.

TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

- Our region's success is entirely down to your efforts, whether at work, raising your families or in your community. **Thank you to each and every one of you for your critical role in the revival of the West Midlands.**

THERE'S MORE TO DO, BUT OUR WORK TOWARDS THE REVIVAL OF THE WEST MIDLANDS HAS BEGUN.



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