

The people's plan for the west Midlands...



THE HEART OF BRITAIN



**Liam
Byrne**
for West Mids
Mayor

 **Labour**
and co-operative

OUR 7 PLEDGES FOR THE 7 BOROUGHES

GET OUR SHARE:

Win a fair share for the West Midlands, the Heart of Britain, and stand up to government to guarantee we get every penny we deserve.

LEAD GREEN BRITAIN:

Become the UK's first net-zero carbon region and secure 200,000 skilled green trades and manufacturing jobs.

BRING BACK INDUSTRY:

Become a world capital of green manufacturing, turn brownfield sites into green industry zones, double apprentice numbers with free retraining for workers who have lost jobs.

BUILD MORE HOMES:

Double the number of truly affordable warm homes we build to put a roof over everyone's head - but we'll build on brownfield first not the greenbelt. Let's have the homes we need without losing the places we love.

SUPPORT OUR YOUTH:

Help our children and grandchildren succeed, and keep them safe from knife crime, starting with youth workers back in every neighbourhood.

PROTECT OUR SAFETY:

Surge in an extra 450 community police officers to boost police numbers in every neighbourhood to fight crime and make our streets safer.

CHAMPION COMMUNITY SPIRIT:

A decade of investment into the soul of community life: grassroots sport, arts, parks, green spaces, high streets, markets and festivals

**A NEW FUTURE FOR
THE HEART OF BRITAIN**

INTRODUCTION

This is a moment of history for the West Midlands.

We've been shaken not by one, but three earthquakes: Covid, our departure from the EU, and the climate emergency. How we address the next three years will define how we progress in the next thirty. So, we have a choice: slink back to business as usual or rise to build a new future for the West Midlands, the heart of Britain.

After four years of a Tory Mayor, no-one is happy with how our Mayoralty works. Residents can't name anything the Mayor has done. Business is frustrated at the bureaucracy. Everyone is disappointed that we've been overlooked and lost out to London, the South and the North. Families are worried about the future. Parents and grandparents are worried about the young. Worse, the combined authority is going bust. There's now a black hole in the budget of more than £1 billion.

Everyone is right to worry. After four years of a Tory Mayor, healthy life expectancy was falling - even before Covid. More people are living in the most deprived communities, not less. And violent crime has doubled in three years. The good life is shorter, poorer and less safe.

Covid hit our region harder than anywhere else. And it hurt some much more than others. Women, black and minority ethnic communities and young people were disproportionately hurt. Inequalities have widened. Women were more likely to lose work or face furlough. Our West Midlands Covid BAME inquiry revealed the harrowing realities of avoidable, disproportionately higher numbers of deaths amongst our ethnic minority community. Our surveys and campaigns revealed the terrible realities of how so many schools lacked the technology needed to deliver home schooling to the poorest families.

So, we can't go back to business as usual. That's why it's time to set a new course for a new future for the West Midlands, a new future for the heart of Britain.

To get this right, we've spent the last year organising a gigantic conversation across the West Midlands: an unprecedented exercise asking residents of the region about their ambitions and anxieties, their fears and hopes for the future.

We've asked hundreds of thousands of residents for their views on the priorities for action. We've held inquiries and commissions with civil society, industry leaders, trade unions and the TUC, Co-Op Party - and 14,000 Labour party members who come from all walks of life. We've organised virtual meetings with residents from Coventry, Wolverhampton and Birmingham to Dudley, West Bromwich, Solihull and Walsall. So, this is the peoples' plan for our future, drawn up from over 10,000 ideas, inspirations and points of view. We've distilled the common sense and practical ingenuity of the people of our region into this manifesto.

The top priorities are clear: jobs, jobs, jobs. Across the region, people are worried about our young people becoming a lost generation - and anxiety about rising crime is not far behind. Locally, people want the simple things done well: - cleaner streets, fewer, speeding cars and good quality parks and public spaces that are welcoming, not run-down and dirty. And despite all the challenges, there were things that people wanted to hold onto from lockdown: a stronger community spirit, cleaner air, less traffic, and more time with loved ones.



A WORD CLOUD OF THE RESPONSES FROM OUR WEST MIDLANDS CONVERSATIONS:

"What, if any, were the silver linings of lockdown?"



When asked,
'What's the main priority for the year ahead?'
residents responded

**JOBS - ESPECIALLY FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE, SMALL BUSINESS
AND MANUFACTURING**



34%

**CLEAN AND GREEN
COMMUNITIES, NICE HOMES
AND GREEN TRANSPORT**



31%

CRIME AND POLICING



15%

LOCKDOWN LEARNINGS

The things we most want to hold onto from lockdown are:

- **STRONGER COMMUNITY SPIRIT**
- **CLEANER AIR**
- **LESS TRAFFIC**
- **LESS POLLUTION**
- **MORE TIME TO SPEND WITH FAMILY**

**It's these perspectives that have helped us shape
our seven pledges for seven boroughs.**



Five generations of my family have lived and worked in the Midlands, as manufacturers, tool makers, teachers and social workers. This is the place where Sarah and I brought up our three amazing children. This is the place where I've served one of our poorest communities for seventeen years and worked with foodbanks and the homeless across the region for the last five. This is the place I've helped build with new infrastructure like New Street station.

I'm so proud of our past. I've literally written history books about it. But politics is about the future. And in the future, I want us to be a leader again. I want us to lead green Britain. Bring back industry. Get our share. I want us to be the place in Britain where it's easiest to get on in life, where we're kind to each other, champion our epic community spirit and look out for each other. That's why it's time for a Mayor to help make it happen. It's time for a Mayor who can meet the moment.

THE TORY RECORD. FOUR YEARS. THIRTY FAILURES

The Tory Mayor has powers and funding to bring back jobs, raise skill levels, build affordable homes and sort good public transport - but he isn't. The Mayor can stand up for our region and campaign on the issues we care about - but he isn't. The Mayor can secure government investment and funding - but he hasn't. Result? Our region is losing out.

Those wasted years before Covid meant Covid hit us harder than anywhere else. Now, the government's Budget warns unemployment in our region may rise by another 50,000. Despite that warning, new investment announced for the West Midlands totalled just £2 per person per week - and we lost out on three critical decisions:

- No investment was announced to back the West Midlands plan for an electric battery gigafactory to make electric batteries for the region's automotive industry.
- The West Midlands was the only region that was not awarded a new freeport - creating the risk of firms leaving the region to set up shops elsewhere.
- Our Town Fund and transport investment totalled just three-quarters of the money awarded to the North West.

Of course, friends of the Conservative Party have made millions from Covid contracts. And while the Prime Minister's former adviser may have bent lockdown laws, he was rewarded with a £45,000 bonus. Yet, our heroic nurses have been given an effective pay cut.

But even before Covid, the Mayor was letting down our region. The Mayor's own numbers speak for themselves. Even before Covid, life in our region was getting poorer, less safe and healthy life expectancy was actually falling. Delays plague the Mayor's efforts to build homes and deliver transport. In the last year he's managed to build just a mile and a quarter of tram track. There are snails that cover four times more ground in a year.

We say enough is enough. We cannot go on like this.



THE TORY RECORD. FOUR YEARS. THIRTY FAILURES

13 WAYS WE'RE POORER

- #1** The West Midlands had a 21% fall in economic output in Q2 2020, the worst region - the second quarter in a row that our region experienced the largest drop in GDP
- #2** Exports in the West Midlands decreased by £2br. from Q1 2019 to Q1 2020 - this was before the impacts of COVID-19 and EU exit
- #3** In the West Midlands, more than 1 in 5 people in a job, some 486,000 people, earn less than the real Living Wage
- #4** Of the neighbourhoods in the West Midlands nearly 1 in 5 are in the top 10% most deprived in England. This is increasing under the Mayor's watch.
- #5** The West Midlands high streets vacancy rate is up, with nearly 1 in 6 shops empty - much higher than London with nearly 1 in 10 empty and the South East with more than 1 in 9
- #6** The digital divide is the UK's worst: more than 1 in 5 people in the West Midlands do not use the internet or have access (15% nationally) and nearly 1 in 4 more have limited use
- #7** The Mayor's own document shows he's secured just 5% of the £3.2bn government investment for which he bid - the West Midlands has not got 95% of the money sought
- #8** The British Business Bank's Future Fund for start-up funding has seen firms in London get nearly 29 times more than our region - our allocation is 3.4% of London's £590.6m
- #9** Our cultural sector has received four times less than London for the government's Cultural Recovery Fund and per capita is the lowest support of any region in England
- #10** West Midlands councils have 169,835 people claiming unemployment benefit, a rate of 9.2% (UK 6.2%) and 5 of the UK's top ten constituencies with most claimants
- #11** The West Midlands has less government investment per capita for Research & Development (R&D) than any region in the UK
- #12** In our region in just six months in 2020 (Mar-Sep) the Trussell Trust foodbank network had already given out 108,295 food parcels - 45% more than the year before 168,886
- #13** In 2020 British Business Bank approvals for loan equity agreements for firms saw just 3% for West Midlands companies while London saw 15 times as many businesses benefit

LESS SAFE

- #14** Police numbers in 2010 for the West Midlands were 8,537 and are now 6,846, a fall of nearly 1 in 5, or almost 2,000 police officers
- #15** Alongside fewer police officer than a decade ago, our region has seen violent crimes more than double over the last three years

- #16** Over the last three years the West Midlands have also seen drug offences increase by more than a third and total recorded crime has gone up 18%

QUALITY OF LIFE IS FALLING

- #17** Rising life expectancy has stalled in the UK for the first time in decades and under the Conservative Mayor's watch, healthy life expectancy has actually fallen in the West Midlands

8 WAYS OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN FAILED

- #18** We're the youngest region in the UK, but our young people have had more funding cuts of any region - funding for young people's services have fallen 80% over the decade
- #19** A year of disrupted schooling can mean a child's lifetime's earning potential is cut by 4% - for our region's children that's £40,000 each and £21bn lost spending in our economy
- #20** Apprenticeships in the West Midlands fell by 24,010, between 2015/16 and 2019/20, a pre-Covid drop of 39.4% and a fall of more than the average of England as whole
- #21** The number of children in nurseries and schools on free school meals is more than 110,000 and has gone up from 19.7% to 22.1% in a year. England is 15%
- #22** In a survey on laptops for schools promised by the government all but one of schools in Birmingham said they did not have enough to go around
- #23** West Midlands councils have 33,660 18-24 year olds on unemployment benefit, a 11.1% rate (UK 8.7%) and 3 of the UK's top 10 constituencies with most 18-24 yr old claimants
- #24** 11.3% of the population of the West Midland, some 290,500 people, have no qualifications, an increase of 6,800 people (+2.4%) from 2018 to 2019 - for the UK this fell by 1.3%
- #25** The number of homes built in the West Midlands for 'social rent', such as council houses, have fallen an incredible 85% since 2010

5 WAYS THE TORY MAYOR IS NOT DELIVERING ON THE BASICS

- #26** The Conservative Mayor has overseen a delay in the spending of 26% of his £510m capital budget including a delay of £112m for transport and £20m for new housing
- #27** Over the last year the Conservative Mayor's managed to build just a 1¼ mile of new tram track - snails cover five times more ground in a year than this
- #28** Before COVID-19, our trains were growing more overcrowded and less reliable while bus passengers were down 15% and bus speeds down 10% over the decade
- #29** The West Midlands is the worst for the number of EV charging points per electric vehicle
- #30** The West Midlands has among the highest levels of unmet cycling demand

"After everything we've been through, after all the agony of lives and livelihoods lost, we can't go back to an approach that was failing. It's time to build back fairer, stronger and greener. It is time for the people's plan for the West Midlands, a new future for the heart of Britain."



Lynne Baird, Campaigner
Birmingham



Yvonne, Carer
West Midlands



Dane, Bus Driver
Wolverhampton



Zoe, Carer
Walsall



Warinder, Solicitor
Wolverhampton



Paddy, Apprentice
Birmingham



Nobby, Former Firefighter
Coventry



Vanessa, British Gas
West Midlands



Mandy, Home Care Worker
Birmingham

**WE'RE BACKING LIAM
FOR WEST MIDLANDS MAYOR!**

GETTING BACK ON OUR FEET

Our region has been the hardest hit by Covid. Yet we've had amongst the worst support. Treasury analysis shows that we've had the fourth worst support in the UK. This is despite our region being home to five of the ten constituencies with the highest claimant count in Britain.

All of us in public life now have a duty to make sure we are not scarred by a 'K-shaped' recovery, where the better off do well, and the less well-off get poorer. We need a one-nation, one-region recovery.

Our recovery plan will have five immediate goals:

1. Vaccinate everyone in every corner of the region as fast as possible.
2. Get the right people working together pulling in the same direction.
3. Maximise our use of money already in the region to support local jobs.
4. Ensure we get our fair share of the government's recovery funding.
5. Make sure every family has access to the basics like food.

To deliver the recovery plan, we will:

Ensure everyone in every corner of the region is vaccinated as fast as possible.

- To enable this, we will get weekly vaccination data published for every council at a ward level. Right now, there's evidence that the vaccination rates are lower in our poorer neighbourhoods than in our richest areas. This is a recipe for disaster. These low vax places are where we will ask the NHS to surge in vaccination capacity using tried and trusted community pharmacies which already successfully deliver the flu jab, and who are trusted by local communities.

Strengthen the West Midlands Jobs Taskforce to coordinate emergency action across the region.

- During the financial crisis, Gordon Brown created the National Economic Council to coordinate the recovery and secure new jobs and new industries. After the Rover crisis, we created a Rover Taskforce to get people back to work. Today the Tory Mayor has said he only wants to replace the jobs lost through Covid - as if that is somehow enough. He's looking backwards not forwards.
- To strengthen the Jobs Taskforce, we will bring together the DWP plus educators, and key players from business, such as the LEPs and Chambers of Commerce to determine where there are risks of major imminent redundancies and begin surging in extra help to stop people becoming unemployed.
- We will ask the three Chambers of Commerce in the region to lead on identifying the key support that business in the region need to stay afloat particularly the sectors and businesses hardest hit.



Establish an emergency budget within the first three months of taking office.

- We will look at all expenditure, plug the Mayor's budget deficit and take the immediate decisions needed to flex investment into securing the recovery, including support for young people.
- We will pin-point the investment projects that need to be accelerated - the new green homes, retrofitting to warm homes, building electric vehicles and public transport, HS2 and Commonwealth Games construction - to map where new jobs can be created. We will partner with DWP to surge in retraining for local residents to secure these jobs.

Undertake an emergency audit of contracts that can be placed with local firms.

- The public sector - councils, the NHS, colleges, universities, schools - across the West Midlands spends billions of pounds each year. We need to maximise the amount going to support local firms. This is called 'community wealth building.' It has been pioneered in areas like Preston Council and Sandwell Council. We will create an emergency Taskforce of the region's expert procurement officers to support local spending bodies in analysing which contracts can be shifted locally fast. We will establish a Prosperity Team in the WMCA to power our community wealth building agenda so that there is one place that supports the public sector driving contracts to local firms and supports our goal of trebling the co-op sector which helps keep the pound local too.

Establish a West Midlands Learning and Skills Agency.

- This new Agency will map the future labour market needs of the region and lead a programme to double apprenticeships numbers and help people in our region secure the estimated new 200,000 green jobs that can help power our region.



Set up a cross-party Team West Midlands to argue for our fair share - and freedoms to deliver government programmes better.

- The West Midlands has been short-changed during this crisis. This must end. Incredibly, the Treasury is not keeping a central scorecard of Covid support programmes. Thankfully the National Audit Office is keeping a record and has identified 287 programmes. We will act immediately to analyse these to assess where the West Midlands is not getting its fair share. We will convene a cross-party Team West Midlands, made up of Members of Parliament, the region's Peers and council leaders to begin negotiating with ministers and making the case in Parliament for our fair share.

- We will then push for freedoms and flexibilities to tailor DWP and DfE programmes to suit our needs. This includes:

- **a) A Green New Jobs Fund to help accelerate our region becoming the first zero carbon city-region:**

This would be a government subsidy of 60% for six months to any private or public sector employer creating a new job in the green economy and key sectors such as automotive. The jobs would be a minimum of 12 months, have training attached and not have zero hours arrangements.

- **b) An Apprenticeship Guarantee:**

A guaranteed apprenticeship for everyone aged 18 to 25, subject to meeting the necessary entry requirements with a minimum of 12-month guarantee of employment and a six-month wage subsidy paid to employers.

- **c) Right to Retrain for Part Time Workers:**

Waiving the employer contribution to the current furlough scheme to enable upskilling of part-time eligible employees in an approved retraining programme in non-working periods.

- **d) Right to Retrain for the Unemployed:**

Funding participation in an approved retraining programme leading to a recognised standard and for up to 30 weeks and relax restrictions like the 16-hour rule, so unemployed people can upskill for a new future.

- e) We will ask government to pool and then devolve several funds to our region for us to use as a new Just Jobs fund. The Adult Education budget is already devolved to our region, but four further funds should be and combined in the region:

- Shared Prosperity Fund
- National Retraining Scheme of £100 million held by the Department for Education
- National Skills Fund
- Unspent government funds from the Apprenticeship Levy

In addition, the group would advance our case for a fair share of the nation's £431 billion national capital programme. If we won the share that reflected the size of our region population, we would have £7.8 billion extra to invest over the next five years.

Team West Midlands will also help push for the relocation of public bodies, agencies and government departments to the region.

Create a Right to Food for West Midlands families and use the emergency budget to route more funding to food banks and community pantries for essential equipment and supplies.

- It is wrong that our families do not have enough to eat. In the last year, Trussell Trust alone handed out 45% more food parcels than last year. Our goal must be zero hunger. So, we will conduct an emergency audit of what infrastructure our heroic community groups need to help deliver zero hunger. We will then draw up a food strategy overseen by a Food Strategy Board, like London, to improve the food system in the West Midlands including availability of good, affordable, healthy food.

COVID INQUIRY

To remember the many Covid victims we will back a memorial and support their families in the West Midlands and ensure the failings do not happen again. We will press for the government to hold a full judge-led public inquiry into Covid.



LYNNE BAIRD IS BACKING LIAM

"I have been campaigning for bleed control kits to be available in public spaces following the death of my son in 2017. Both Liam Byrne and Simon Foster have been incredibly supportive of this work and their determination to reduce knife crime is a cause close to my heart. They are the only candidates I trust to make the West Midlands a safer place."

MAKING OUR GREEN FUTURE

Recovery is just the first step. The second step is to take our region in a new direction. To become a leader once more.

Ours was the region that started the industrial revolution when the Newcomen steam engine was demonstrated in Dudley in 1712. It's a day we still remember on Black Country Day. We led the carbon revolution. Now we must lead the zero carbon revolution and set a goal to become the first net zero carbon cities-region in England, the first part of our country to secure a 100% clean and green future.

Our special contribution to this global challenge will be to make our green future. We will bring back industry by re-industrialising as one of the world's clean tech capitals - the place that makes the electric vehicles, the zero carbon railways and the jet zeros of the future, along with the medical technology vital for healthier lives and the digital products we need to live differently.

These are already gigantic markets and they are growing rapidly. Over the last year, our Green Manufacturing Commission has created a road map for us to become once more a place of good, modern, well-paid manufacturing jobs. The government says it wants to create two million green collar jobs by 2030. By leading the green industrial revolution, we will secure our fair share. That's 200,000 green collar jobs for the West Midlands. Once we were the workshop of the world. This century, we will be a green workshop of the world.

There are five principles which will guide our approach:

1. Accelerate and coordinate demand for the green products of the future and set a clear, ambitious net zero goal to guide everything we do
2. Provide firms with support to go net zero and prosper in the green economy
3. Create the regional institutions to help supply the special ingredients we need to make the leap - money, ideas, energy along with power and digital networks
4. Fix the 'net zero' skills gap to ensure the region's residents get the green jobs
5. Attract the world's best clean tech firms, green manufacturers and green investors to set up in the West Midlands by making sure it's easier to 'go net zero' in the West Midlands than anywhere else



To deliver these goals, we need ten bold moves:

1. Net Zero.

We will reset the region's target for going net zero carbon from 2040s, to the mid-2030s, with the aim to becoming the first net zero city-region in Britain. Today, the West Midlands WMCA seven boroughs emit around 11,385ktCo₂ of greenhouse gas pollution each year. We need to reduce this by 13% a year to meet the 2041 target. By raising our ambition level to 16% cuts each year, we can bring this target forward to the mid-2030's.

2. COP-WM.

We will act immediately to convene a COP-WM in early autumn to bring together the key players in the region to reset our industrial strategy around a new mission: to become the green workshop of the world.

3. GrETHA.

We will integrate and consolidate Mayoral delivery organisations and programmes into a new Mayoral structure, GrETHA (Green Energy, Housing, Transport Agency). It will bring together Transport for the West Midlands, the WMCA Housing team, along with the teams working on green policy, energy and 5G/digital and a new Mayoral Development Corporation to create a green powerhouse for the region, with a budget of to oversee a £2.8 billion investment programme over the next five years, with a mission to drive demand for the green economy and speed us towards becoming the net zero carbon region in Britain.

The Agency will be responsible for working with each of the combined authority local authorities to create integrated plans in a City or Borough Deal for eight key things in every community: (a) public transport, management of strategic roads and active travel (b) acceleration of EV charging networks (c) digital network roll out (d) renewable energy and smart grids, (e) green industry zones, (f) green affordable homes (g) retrofitting homes with energy efficiency and (h) trees and new green spaces.

4. West Midlands Green Bonds.

We will equip the Agency with our dormant borrowing capacity of around £500 million with a goal of increasing this fund through the issuing of West Midlands Green Bonds to investors who wish to join us building the future, in:

- Zero-energy bill homes, both new and retro-fitted
- Green transport systems
- Green energy
- Modern recycling and closed loop resource management plants
- Forests and tree planting

5. Zero-based Budget Review.

Today the Combined Authority's investment programme is bust with more than a £1 billion black hole in its programme. The priorities and programmes were also put together well before Covid, Brexit and the declaration of a climate emergency and therefore do not meet these challenges. We will therefore conduct a zero-based review of our capital investment programme to ensure that our programme is aligned with our ambition for a net zero carbon region. We will seek to complete this before the government's Comprehensive Spending Review expected later this year.



6. Total Capital Investment.

We will invite the local authorities, LEPs, and other local spending bodies in the region to, alongside us, conduct a zero-based review of their own investment (capital) programmes and assets to map public spending and assess through a 'carbon lens'. This will create a super-efficient 'Total Capital' approach to public spending.

7. Zero-Carbon Transport Plan.

Transport is responsible for 29% of energy usage. The goal of the zero-based review of transport capital will be to ensure we're spending in the right way to accelerate a 'modal shift' to both electric transport and public transport. We will therefore set a mandate for our transport system to meet our ambition to be the first net zero city region. This target will underpin everything we do, and we will deliver a ten-year plan to bring forward a transport system that is reliable, integrated, safe, affordable and green. A safe transport network is a must, so we will prioritise the safety of women and girls and it will be reflected in all decisions taken by the WMCA such as how we plan, design and deliver transport. We will also work with councils and community and disability organisations to improve accessibility of transport and services such as Ring and Ride.

- **Make It Here:**

We need to buy British-made and make our modern, green, integrated transport system here. We've always made things. So, we will run a 'Make It Here' review as part of a revamped industrial strategy to identify where our transport strategy can foster transport manufacturing in our region - from very light rail, to electric vehicles to buses, batteries, and hydrogen fuel cells, e-bikes and bicycles. The results will go into our industrial policy.

- **Truly integrated transport:**

We will integrate the transport system across all modes of transport, upgrade the Swift travel pass with simple, smart ticketing and set a daily fare cap for multiple journeys commencing with buses and expand to other modes. To boost demand by making travel easier, we will seek to freeze fares on buses, reduce the cost of passes and introduce weekly fare caps.

- **Project Speed West Midlands:**

£112 million of the Mayor's transport projects are running late - just like West Midlands Trains. We will change this. We will create a West Midlands Project Speed Board of leading experts tasked with accelerating - and greening - our transport programme. This will look at the role of the various bodies in the West Midlands, new delivery techniques, new models such as land value capture to secure more investment, and bring together housing, planning, energy and economic programmes to promote connected and greener communities.

We will take the 'tube map' for the West Midlands and see how West Midlands Project Speed can quicken delivery from 2040s to 2030s and stop the delay to transport programmes that the Tory Mayor has overseen. It will look at how to deploy very light rail at scale and take forward programmes like the East Birmingham and Solihull Tram proposal which the Mayor has 'put on hold'. These recommendations will be ready for our COP-WM to be held in early autumn.

Project Speed will also look at how the programmes of utilities companies and construction and schemes can be better co-ordinated and executed and options such as lane charging could be deployed so programmes are completed more quickly and disruption to roads reduced.

- **Cycling and active travel:**

Our region has among the highest unmet cycling demands. The West Midlands cycle route expansion plan is 14 times smaller than Manchester. Leicester is building an extra mile of cycle lane a week. Our goal will be to double levels of cycling by 2025 and with 50% of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030.

We will appoint an Active Travel Commissioner to lead the West Midlands cycling and walking revolution and to work with authorities and local communities. GrETHA will broker active travel plans with each council and develop a cycling network across the region including segregated routes and use of our canals. We will review WMCA funding for transport and infrastructure projects, so funding provides high-quality active travel provision and base our work on the latest local transport network (LTN1/20) guidance.

- **Very light rail.**

We will drive forward the very light rail proposals to be introduced in Coventry with technology developed in Dudley, with a goal of running a fleet of 100 shuttles to reconnect the region with transport technology made here in the region.

- **Buses.**

We will ask for bus funding to be devolved to the region and assess the potential to introduce bus franchising, rapidly completing the TfWM assessment already underway to investigate the potential for using the powers of the 2017 Bus Act to develop Transport for London style services. We will judge the way forward on the fastest path to deliver our goals for increasing direct bus services and re-connecting cut-off communities including cross-city links in Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry and across the Black Country with fast, affordable routes from West Bromwich and Walsall so that by 2024, 40% of people in the West Midlands benefit; and bringing forward a network of electric and green buses route with Coventry buses all electric by 2025. We will aim for half of all West Midlands buses to be electric or hydrogen by 2025 so that 40% of the mileage will be zero emissions by 2025.

- **Trains.**

TfWM does not run our region's trains, but we demand powers from and funding from the government to control and run the franchises like Wales is now doing and Scotland is doing from next year.

We will press train companies to move to electric or hydrogen trains and seek to have them built in the Midlands. We will negotiate with the train companies for early replacement of diesels - well before the 2040 date set by the government.

- **Green leasing.**

We will explore the creation of a green vehicle leasing company as part of the TfWM to buy and the lease green vehicles including, taxis and delivery vans made in the region, such as LEVC, and e-bikes and e-cargo bikes. This will help taxi drivers and delivery drivers and 'gig economy' workers to cheaply lease vehicles and e-bikes that are better for the environment. We will audit the major vehicle fleets across business and public bodies to determine the best way that these can be turned green more swiftly.

- **EV charging networks.**

Electric vehicles EVs are part of the solution to reach net zero although are not the whole solution as EVs still bring congestion and release particulates through braking and is why a move to public transport and active travel is needed. To aid moving more quickly on EVs we need charging points, but the West Midlands has the worst ratio of charging points to electric vehicles. So, through GrETHA we will target creating one of the best EV charging networks by 2030. Will seek an injection of government funding, ensure every new home and commercial development funded by the WMCA includes new EV charging points and we will work to overcome the developing two-tier system where only some people benefit from low cost home EV charging. If people can't undertake home charging, then on street and rapid forecourt charging can be many times more expensive.

- We will campaign to unlock our fair share of government funding for electric battery gigafactories to secure a West Midlands gigafactory to build batteries for the electric vehicles (EVs) we need.

8. Zero-Carbon Communities Plan.

The Tory Mayor is not prioritising the building of affordable homes for rent – building rates have fallen 85% over the decade. To hide this, the Tory presents data drawn from across the entire West Midlands, down to the Welsh border! When we look at the figures for the Mayoral areas, we see the truth. Ninety-seven percent of the homes built last year in the combined authority council area were not affordable homes for social rent. That's a scandal.

So, we will double the building of truly affordable homes, and to help enable young people to get a home of their own. We will pilot a new young person and key workers affordable home ownership scheme as devised by Sir David Garrard. We want to help people get a foot on the ladder and have somewhere to bring up a family of their own.



GrETHA will ensure that the homes we build are green and energy efficient, so homes are warmer and have cheaper bills. All current plans will be reviewed against these standards. New programmes undertaken will be built to this standard with and digital and EV-charging connections too.

- Over a century ago, our region pioneered the concept of '15-minute communities' - though we didn't call it that then. We should lead this movement once again. So, we will prioritise new housing developments that bring safe, thriving, liveable places with affordable homes, good transport, green space and ready access to jobs and promote different housing models like co-operative homes.
- Over the Mayoral term of office, we will use the WMCA development funding to build on brownfield first, not the greenbelt because we should have the homes we need without losing the places we love. We will assess the house building programme to prioritise developments that councils actually want to take forward such as in Brewers Yard in Wolverhampton and Druids Heath and Ladywood in Birmingham.
- The biggest challenge in achieving net zero carbon is retro-fitting 1.2 million homes across the region. Retro-fitting will be a boom industry. It could bring back thousands of jobs and cut the cost of living for an average family in the West Midlands. A regional approach to delivery will speed progress and save money. But the cost is so great we will need government funding. So, we will ask government to devolve funding for retrofit, energy efficiency and the successor to the Green Homes Grant funding.
- To create investable models for change and to establish jobs in the region, we will create a Retrofit Taskforce with the Registered Social Landlords and develop retrofit co-operatives. Our Co-op Taskforce highlighted how this can be done with the example of RetrofitWorks in London and the South East, a co-op of small and medium sized firms

9. Zero Carbon Energy.

Today, the West Midlands spends more than £10 billion a year on energy and most of this is from fossil fuels. Meanwhile firms in the Black Country are reporting power cuts.

- GrETHA will pump-prime investment in renewable energy projects including investment for a network of green industry zones with at least one brownfield industrial site transformed into a green industry zones in every borough.
- We will pump prime investment to increase West Midlands renewable energy production and heat and energy networks for homes and business, coordinating joint energy buying to reduce costs such as across local authorities, the WMCA and TfWM. We will work with councils to bring forward plans to convert existing waste facilities into four modern waste closed loop resource management plants.
- We will explore with the Welsh Assembly Government how we can use the funding we have available to kickstart investment in the infrastructure such as Go West's co-investment in wind turbines to power and accelerate electrification.



10. Re-plant the West Midlands Forests, small and large.

Once there were forests across our region – such as the Arden Forest through which no Roman roads were built. Today, as a country we have the lowest forest cover in Europe and the most depleted wildlife and biodiversity. In our region the tree cover is woefully low. We will increase tree canopy cover in our urban and semi-urban areas to a gold standard of 25% - which is recognised to be the target needed. This is a big step up from current ambitions and means planting one to two trees for every person in the region by 2035.

We will plant dozens of forests large and small including 'Commonwealth Jubilee forests' across the West Midlands to commemorate the Commonwealth Games and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and begin replanting the ancient Forest of Arden immortalised by Shakespeare, around Arden Cross. We will ask HS2 and Seven Trent Water, which are both committed to significant tree planting, to help by accelerating their programmes.

We will cherish our green spaces by supporting community groups to reinvest in local parks and nature - GrETHA alongside a series of new community funds will enable investment in our green and public spaces and tree planting.

We will work with citizens to establish a Charter for Nature in the West Midlands and we will seek to become the first bee-friendly region, establishing bee corridors across the West Midlands and plant roadside wildflower banks.

Too many people have no gardens and too little access to parks and open space and so we will set a target for every person to be within a 15-minute walk of a green space and publish a plan for new spaces to deliver this. As part of this we will back new local pocket parks and spaces and plans such as the Duddeston Viaduct skypark, the West Midlands equivalent of the 'Highline'. We will use GrETHA to ensure that new green spaces are created through new developments.

These changes will create far more certainty about the demand for the green economy over the next 15 years. To support our business community to shifting towards this new world, we will need to create five bodies to support the sales and skills, ideas and finance of local firms.

1. Investment to Prosper:

A WMCA Prosperity Team. This mission of this team will be to help keep the public pound local. The public sector spends billions in the region. Some projects like the Commonwealth Games are driving £100 million in contracts to local firms. But we need to do far more and build on the community wealth building work of Birmingham Council and Sandwell Council. The Prosperity Team will ensure that there is one place that supports the public sector driving contracts to local firms and supports our goal of trebling the coop sector.

We will commission the region's Chambers of Commerce to support local firms bidding for these contracts - and de-risk the Chambers' brilliant work supporting our exporters by guaranteeing a 10-year contract for export support services, removing the uncertainty created by mismanagement of export support by the Department for International Trade. Alongside, we will assist the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Chambers of Commerce in improving business support services particularly for advice on buying, selling, exporting and local sourcing of green products.

We will join with the Labour Metro-Mayors of Manchester and Liverpool, and Labour's Mayoral candidate in West Yorkshire to sign the Good Employment Charter to increase good jobs with opportunities for people to progress, good employment standards, employee voice, trade union representation, and paying a Real Living Wage. We will embed Karl George's 'RACE Code' in procurement to tackle discrimination and ensure public contracts go to firms doing the right thing - backing the trail-blazing work of Unison and the Chambers of Commerce in proposing models of reform.

The eyes of 1.5 billion people will be on us during the Commonwealth Games, so we will use this to tell our story to the world. But this is not a one-off. We will ask the new WMCA Culture and Sports team that we will set up, and the West Midlands Growth Company and the Chambers of Commerce, which support exporters, to put together our story by the end of the year, with a ten-year plan to promote the 'Made in the Midlands' brand through to the 2030 World Cup, which we will campaign to host in the Midlands. To boost this, we should ask the Festival UK* 2022 to include an Expo of Midlands Green Manufacturing.

2. Skills to Prosper: West Midlands Learning and Skills Agency.

Business is already warning of a net zero skills gap. This is unacceptable at a time of sky-high unemployment, and when the number of apprenticeships has collapsed by 40%.

So, we will establish a West Midlands Learning and Skills Agency to map the future labour market needs of the region, bring together schools, colleges and universities to create a programme for tomorrow's engineers and creatives, double the number of apprenticeship places, reboot a careers service, and start an UCAS-style system for apprenticeships just like Greater Manchester. We will connect young people to opportunities, ensure educators have the investment they need to stay at the cutting edge of industrial techniques, and ensure the £650m of adult skills budget is targeted for maximum effect over the next five years. Our plans will include establishing a major programme of work placements for 18-30 year olds and we will work with Citizens UK to develop this.

Our goal is to deliver an Apprenticeship Guarantee enabling young people to gain skills and advice that they need to get the jobs in the new green industries and help businesses to get the people they need. We will ask government to reform the apprenticeships levy so that unspent funds can be spent on new places in our region, to help deliver this goal.

3. Ideas to Prosper: West Midlands Innovation Agency.

Companies need advice and support to make the leap to net zero. We will learn the lessons from Germany's Fraunhofers, the Israel Innovation Authority and South Korea, to support willing universities and colleges coming together to undertake a review to create an R&D service for the West Midlands small business community. We will ask Innovate UK to work with us to create a matching public subsidy for this research so the whole costs are not borne by the private sector.

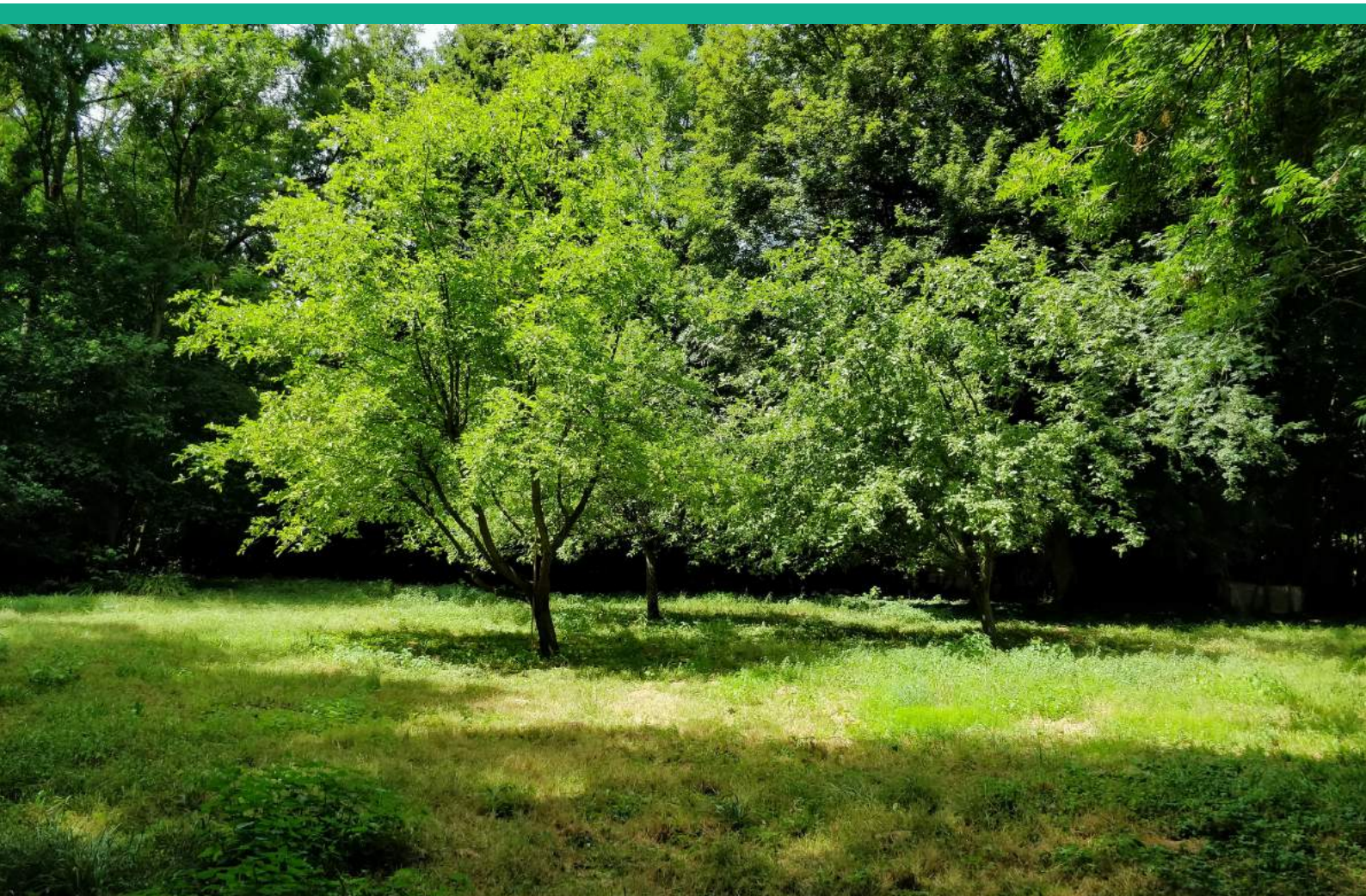
4. Finance to Prosper: West Midlands Bank.

The West Midlands invented the municipal bank over a hundred years ago to help local residents and savers save in a place that supported local communities and businesses. Today, these regional banks, known as Sparkasse are key to the German manufacturing success story. Regions - like Bristol and the South West - are creating similar institutions.

We should too. Working with Finance Birmingham, we will create a West Midlands Banking Inquiry to review the case for creating a bank in the West Midlands with a lending capacity of up to £500 million to support local industry. The inquiry will address how we might create services like those proposed by the CWU Postbank and Co-op People's Bank concepts. We will urge the West Midlands LGPS pension fund which covers the WMCA, to divest from fossil fuels to ensure it meet our goals of net zero carbon.

5. Greening Faster to Prosper: Green Energy, Transport & Housing Agency (GrETHA).

As laid out before, reorganise the WMCA to create a new agency GrETHA covering green energy, transport and housing in order to drive the demand for the green economy and speed us towards becoming the net zero carbon region.



FRANK FROM BIRMINGHAM IS BACKING LIAM



"Liam Byrne is the only candidate who understands and supports the significance of the manufacturing sector, especially the automotive sector, in the West Midlands region."

"As the automotive sector transitions to electrification, Liam wants to ensure manufacturing gets support and moves to a green economy, protecting jobs for future generations."

BEST LIFE CHANCES FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Our region is the youngest in Britain. So, we must be the best place in Britain to be young.

Today, the rug has been pulled from under the next generation. Too often, the postcode where people are born defines their possibilities in life. Yet in our region, talent is everywhere, but the opportunity is not.

Before Covid, we had the fastest rising rate of youth unemployment in Britain. Many young people have been on furlough for over a year. The government's Kickstart scheme is failing. The careers advice service in the West Midlands has withered. Apprenticeships have fallen by nearly 40% - a greater fall than across England. Lost learning during Covid will cost our pupils an extraordinary £21 billion in lost lifetime earnings. Thousands of these children are on free school meals, yet Tory MPs voted to deny them the meals during school holidays, while the Mayor stood silent. Under the Conservative Government over the last decade youth services have been cut by 80% - the worst of any region. The region's overall number of children's mental health cases has been rising eight times faster than funding. And in Birmingham over 1,000 young people have presented in A&E requiring treatment for self-harm in just five years and the indications are that mental health conditions have increased during Covid. For the long term, it is getting harder for young people to set down roots because the number of homes built in the West Midlands for social rent, such as council houses, has fallen an incredible 85% from a decade ago.

There is a great short-changing for our young people. And when we short-change children, we short-change our future. We can't go on like this.

The historic role of the Labour Party in our country has always been, and always will be, to create a democracy of opportunity. This will be our goal in the West Midlands under a Labour Mayor. The defining mission of my Mayoralty will be to make our region the place that gives young people the best life chances.

Our ten-point plan for the next generation, will begin to turn this ambition into action.



1. Immediate action to end the youth unemployment emergency.

On day one of a Labour Mayor, we will strengthen the West Midlands Jobs Taskforce and task it with bringing forward a plan to tackle youth unemployment.

- In the first 100 days we will ask all the major employers in the region, together with HS2 and the Commonwealth Games, to identify the vacancies they can create for young people, and pin point the training and support.
- We will audit all contracts across public bodies and determine those that can be placed with local firms to help bring back jobs in our region.
- We will establish an emergency budget within the first three months of taking office and take the immediate decisions needed to secure the recovery and to invest in young people.
- We will work with the other Metro-Mayors to propose that the government re-creates the Youth Jobs Guarantee that was so successful 10 years ago in the last recession and to reform the failed Kickstart programme to become a Green Kickstart to mobilise young people to make our green future.
- We will hold a review to assess how best we can kickstart youth enterprise in the region to help our young entrepreneurs set-up and grow a business.

2. Immediate action to begin rebuilding youth services.

Right now, too many of our young people simply don't have the support that they should. Parents and grandparents have watched as youth centres have been closed and youth workers laid off. Cuts to youth services hurt young people. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Knife Crime found a direct link between cuts to youth services and the rise in knife crime - and knife has surged in our region by a third in the last four years.

The Combined Authority has secured a short-term windfall of £12 million from lower interest rates on its borrowing. We will use this to help councils to begin replacing youth workers in every neighbourhood. We will use our Zero-Based Budget Review to identify the funding for a 10-year plan to make this permanent and with safe spaces for young people. The programme will include bringing together:

- The legacy programme finance from the Coventry's City of Culture and the Commonwealth Games.
- The West Midlands share of the £500 million announced by the government for youth work, but not yet awarded. We will join forces with other Metro-Mayors to ensure this funding is paid over to help our young people.
- Funding from Sport England, the Football Foundation, and the Arts Council for the 'one pot' funding.





3. Action to educate and train tomorrow's engineers and creatives.

We need our young people to be ready to take the jobs that will be brought back as we become a Green Workshop of the World. We will set up a West Midlands Skills & Learning Agency to work with colleges, universities and businesses and unions to double apprentice numbers, reboot a careers service and start an UCAS-style system for apprenticeships to connect young people to opportunity. We will:

- Adapt and deploy the programme championed by the Royal Academy of Engineering and refined in the region by Warwick Manufacturing Group and Dudley College, to make sure best practice is spread across the region.
- Agree a 10-year plan from participating colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers to advance a single regional green technologies skills plan linked to the industrial strategy to create hard-wired paths, from junior school to the jobs of the future for tomorrow's engineers and creatives.

- Supported by the Chambers of Commerce and LEPs and colleges forecast the region's high-level labour market needs, and priority skills gaps. This will include:
 - Estimated demand for skills, curriculum mapping including against T-levels.
 - Priority gaps in the skills system to fix, including expansion of ESOL provision
 - Assessing how to increase the number of women taking up apprenticeships in engineering and manufacturing.
 - Capital investment needs, plus proposals for the government's Strategic Development Fund for further education.
 - Priorities for the £650 million five-year Mayoral budget for adult skills.
 - Proposals to be submitted to the government's Comprehensive Spending Review will urge devolved control of government funds including the 'Shared Prosperity Fund' of £2.1 billion p.a; the £100m National Retraining Scheme; the National Skills Fund supposed to be £600m a year; recycling the budgets for apprenticeship starts which have dropped; and the apprenticeship levy.

4. Focused action to rebuild our collapsing apprenticeship system.

The apprenticeship system has collapsed under the Tory Mayor, with places down by 40% before the Covid crisis hit.

- The Agency we will establish a UCAS-style system across the West Midlands as Manchester has done to connect young people to the opportunities.
- Over the Mayoral term we will double the number of apprenticeship places currently on offer today.
- We will reboot a careers service in schools and colleges and connect to the opportunities in the economy ahead. In addition, this will be a service which provides advice on mentoring, mental health and education.

5. Action to rebuild our young people mental health services.

Poor mental health is hurting our young people and stopping them get on in life. We will hold an inquiry as to how the region can rebuild mental health services for young people. We will campaign for a reduction in waiting times for children and young people to access mental health services and we will ask the NHS to publish data showing waiting times as the Mayor of Greater Manchester has.

6. Phase in an Opportunity Pass for 16-18-year olds to open up our young peoples' horizons.

We want to bring young people together and widen horizons. So, we will enhance the Swift travel card, which includes the youth travel concession, and work with sports and cultural organisations to bring forward a range of discounts or free entry to places, spaces and events.

We will consult with council leaders and council taxpayers on a long-term solution for reduced or free travel for young people. As a first step we will go further than the current half price travel for 16-18 year olds and introduce free weekend bus travel for 16-18 year olds at the earliest opportunity.

7. Ensure the Commonwealth Games is a platform on which our young people shine - and lead.

Our young people are incredible. They are on the cutting edge of social change, creative and collaborative. We need to help them lead. So, we will use the Commonwealth Games to create an ambitious Young Commonwealth Leaders programme to train hundreds of young people with the skills to become community leaders for their generation, including a new cohort of women leaders. Alongside we will:

- Back our young leaders and our councillors with a new Mayor's charity fund to support #Decade of Togetherness to support initiatives that bring people from diverse backgrounds together, to make positive change happen with events and activities.
- Work for positive change and grow tolerance across the generations in every community - we will support Pride in all cities, boroughs and towns, and support young LGBT+ people and ambassadors from minority backgrounds.
- A new 'one-stop pot' will bring together different funding bodies which will enable fast track funding for new young people's community facilities.
- We will ask every school governing body to consider a twinning relationship with a school in a community that is different, to help develop the work and experience of school councils.
- We will work with each council to develop a playing pitch strategy (artificial and grass) and help pool funding to deliver this. We will add capacity and expertise to councils with a small, experienced team of delivery professionals to help broker funding and delivery with a goal of 30 pitches over the next five years.
- We will ask the region's cultural sector to involve young people in shaping the development delivery of cultural initiatives and events and which bring people together and involves the diversity of our region.

8. Establish Mayor's Community Volunteers.

Volunteering is enriching and lets young people help change the world for the better and build social networks that last a lifetime. We will work with the National Community Service teams to increase the number and range of volunteering opportunities for young people. In particular, we will work to maximise the number of young people helping re-plant our trees, mini-forests and forests.

We will back the Young Combined Authority's idea to establish young environmental champions to build awareness of how we change to be green and how people can benefit from the opportunities ahead.

9. Homes for the future.

Today, the WMCA is not prioritising the delivery of affordable homes within its more than £280 million home building programme. We will. We'll kickstart low cost energy efficient homes for social rent and affordable homes to buy so that our young people can get a foot on the ladder and have somewhere to bring up families of their own. We will double the current rate of the building of truly affordable homes. GrETHA will ensure that these homes are green and energy efficiency – what we need for our green future. We want low cost new homes to be within easy reach of the next generation. We will pilot a new young person and key workers affordable home ownership scheme as devised by Sir David Garrard.

We will campaign for the restoration of housing benefit for the under-25s and for government to end the policy of 'no recourse to public funds' which creates homelessness and rough sleeping. In addition, we will undertake a review into an acceleration of pathways out of temporary accommodation.

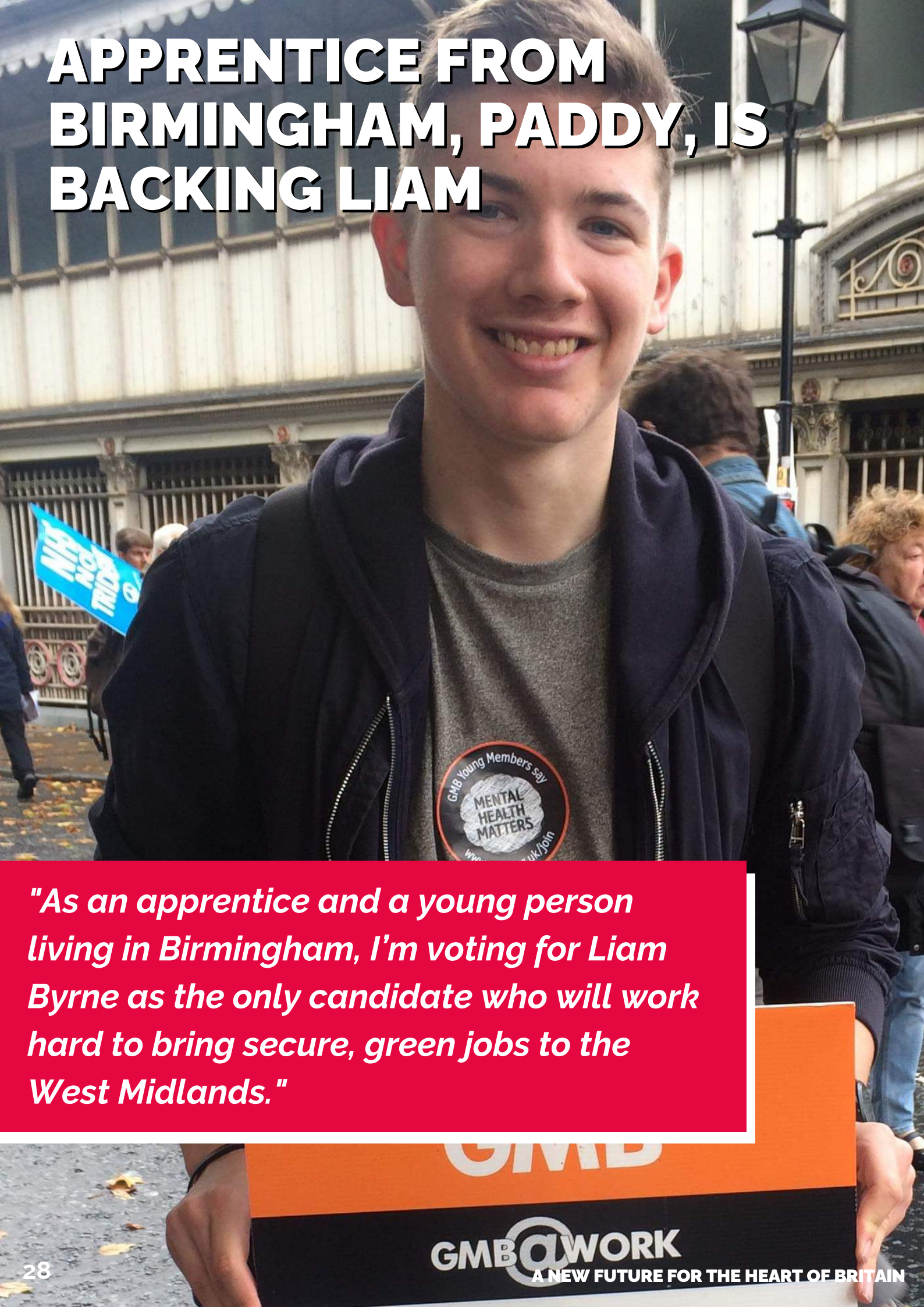
10. Ensure our young people help lead the region.

The challenges we face today are such that we need the ingenuity and creativity of young people more than ever. That's why we need to create platforms on which our young people can help lead the region. We will:

- Work with the WMCA leaders and Youth Combined Authority (YCA) to agree a process for electing, nominating or electing Youth Mayors and as Mayor I will meet regularly with the YCA and with our region's Youth Parliament representatives
- Work with the WMCA leaders and the Youth Combined Authority to strengthen their scrutiny, policy development and campaigning roles.
-



APPRENTICE FROM BIRMINGHAM, PADDY, IS BACKING LIAM



"As an apprentice and a young person living in Birmingham, I'm voting for Liam Byrne as the only candidate who will work hard to bring secure, green jobs to the West Midlands."

A SAFER, STRONGER COMMUNITY LIFE

We love the West Midlands.

That's why we want our community to be a safe, strong community for all, in our green and pleasant land. Thousands of people have told us that the one silver lining they want to hold on to from lockdown was the incredible surge in community spirit.

Our region - with its three mighty cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton our boroughs like Dudley, Solihull, Walsall and Sandwell, and our royal town of Sutton Coldfield make up of an incredible tapestry of places all with their own extraordinary diversity, richness, pride, history, strength.

But, there are divisions. Of wealth. Of generations. Of communities. Bridging these divisions, creating a unity in our community, will be a mission for me in the decade to come. We want a more united region in a more United Kingdom.

Bringing our region together is everybody's business. We will challenge every institution to contribute, to ask what it can do to bridge the divides in our region today. We know we can do it.

It was here in the West Midlands, within living memory, that we faced down Enoch Powell. We proved him wrong by standing together. By championing hope, not hate. The Labour Party and trade unions campaigned for changes to outlaw racial discrimination, while the everyday contact in the classrooms, our workplaces and on the football terraces meant we got to know our neighbours. We have come a long way.

But we need more than pride. When those who spread ancient hatreds are amplified by new technologies and the most divisive voices are given a megaphone in the tabloids and online, it has never been more important to amplify our voices too, the uniters rather than the dividers, the coalition of kindness that works to bring people together.

We can and will bring people together in the way we:

- Serve together
- Learn together
- Play together
- Remember together
- Work together





There are five principles that need to guide us:

1. Community safety is the foundation on which we build everything else - people want communities where it's safe to walk down the street.
2. Culture and sport must breath community life into every neighbourhood, not just city centres and involve and reflect all communities.
3. We need to bring people together in celebration as well as in remembrance.
4. Our communities need to be a green and pleasant land - Covid showed the importance of parks and open spaces, and something that we value.
5. If there is a silver lining of Covid it is the fantastic community spirit - we must build on this - and ensure the West Midlands is a place of amazing welcomes.

To turn these ambitions into action we will take forward a 9-point plan to drive forward a decade of unity, a decade of Togetherness from the Coventry City of Culture and Commonwealth Games, through to the 2030 World Cup, which we will campaign to host. We will also back the campaign to build a velodrome after the Commonwealth Games. We will explore opportunities to bring other sporting events to the West Midlands such as cricket, rugby, cycling, Formula E and Birmingham International Marathon. In addition, we will support local festivals and events to celebrate our heroes, heritage and communities. We will:

1. Staff a Culture and Sport team.

We will back the amazing work of councils which will continue to lead on culture and sport in our region, and provide support, join up our cultural opportunities and fill in the gaps. To make sure we are integrating culture, sport, and tourism effectively, we will seek to move the tourism promotion functions from the West Midlands Growth Company, to provide the core of this new Culture and Sports team.

2. We will support our amazing community groups and social entrepreneurs and future sports stars, with five funds:

(a) Mayor's Community Weekend Fund.

The Mayor's Community Weekend was a great innovation. But we will move it to coincide with the Great British Get Together. It will be part of a decade long-series of events to bring us together.

(b) Set up a 'Decade of Togetherness' charitable fund to support festivals, events and activities, helping us to celebrate. We will set up a calendar of community festivals and local events and provide and coordinate funding to help others get off the ground. Some will be an opportunity for remembrance. Others to celebrate our heroes, heritage and history – the variety of culture and cultures we have here, our veterans, St George's Day and other special occasions.

We have an opportunity to put our food on the map with a West Midlands Food festival as well as support local events.

(c) One Stop Pot for Local Heroes. Our region is packed with local heroes and community groups that bring people together. But they find the red-tape round funding a nightmare. We will bring together the different funding for arts, sports and culture in a single 'one stop-pot' to make it easier for organisations to bid for and to fast track funding and to help rebuild and support neighbourhood clubs and volunteer organisations and to enable activities and events which bring us all together.

(d) Forgotten Places Fund. Across the West Midlands there are derelict, disused areas of land that collect litter and are forgotten and unloved. Communities have come together to bring some of these spaces back to life. We want to give a boost to these efforts. We will establish a West Midlands

Forgotten Places Fund for communities to recommend places to be restored and improved. Each year a selection will be chosen and awarded funding to create the space into a pocket-park or to commission public art from local artists. We'll put in some capital funding from the GrETHA budget as well as seek sponsorship and donations from businesses with the aim of a £4 million annual fund.

(e) Pride of Place Fund for Markets and High Streets. Markets have been a lifeblood and community buzz for centuries, but they need support. We will produce a 'Markets of the West Midlands Map' and with a new fund to help revive and support them, even create new markets. The fund will enable small scale improvements works to take places such as installing electricity facilities or improving the streetscape to make it more attractive or bring cultural activities to the high street attracting people to shopping areas. The funding will come from the GrETHA budget and we will seek funding from government and other pots to aim to create an annual fund of £4 million.

3. More named police officers in neighbourhoods.

We've agreed with our brilliant candidate for Police & Crime Commissioner, Simon Foster, that we will back his plans 100% to surge in an extra 450 community police officers to boost police numbers in every neighbourhood to fight crime and make our streets safer.

4. Safer streets and roads.

Nearly 100 children are killed or seriously injured on our roads in the West Midlands each year. We will support local councils to create more school streets for safe travels to school and set up a local road safety fund for local councillors for action in their neighbourhoods to curb dangerous driving and speeding cars and we will work with the Police & Crime Commissioner to improve enforcement. To curb speeding vehicles, we will seek new powers from government for local enforcement for a range of driving offences and use fines to invest in road safety. We will seek devolution of Vehicle Exercise Duty (VED) paid in the region so we can do more on road safety and transport improvements and ask for powers for councils to establish 20 mph zones more effectively and economically because current rules are cumbersome.

5. Community Innovation Districts.

In every community, we need to mobilise 'anchor institutions' to help create more vibrant spaces and places. 'Community Innovation Districts', modelled on the Business Improvement District, will help us reopen vacant buildings and shops and new community hubs as well as promote community wealth building to kept spending in our region. We want disused buildings, empty shops and offices on high streets brought into use; as low-cost small business space to support a new general of entrepreneurs, to scale up co-op business, organisations and services and assets and enable community buildings for co-operative use. Co-operatives have a track record of being community focused, keeping money local, having local roots and employing local people.

6. Put our history on the map.

We will assist our councils in backing and creating museums, visitor attractions and creative hubs that put our culture on the map such as people's music: Heavy Metal, Two-Tone, bhangra and contemporary music, as well as Shakespeare, Tolkien and Science, Innovation and Design. We will make sure that this team works closely with BECTU, Musicians Union and Equity as well as industry partners to maximise our impact.

We will campaign to boost BBC digital and media production in our region, and working with trade unions, Create Central and industry partners, fast-track plans for new film and digital content studios in Digbeth.

We will adopt the principles set out in the 'Creative Workforce Pledge' and work with organisations and bodies across the West Midlands to bring it to life and support our world class creative and cultural workforce.

7. Night-time economy champion.

Other regions have a night-time economy champion, but we don't. We will appoint a night-time economy champion to work with venues on re-opening and to promote the nightlife in our region. Our champion will look to the visitors we will welcome through the Coventry City of Culture and the Commonwealth Games and Festival UK* 2022 next year.



8. Cherish parks and spaces and improve access to nature and green space.

We will increase tree canopy cover to a gold standard of 25%. This is a big step up from current ambitions and means planting one to two trees for every person in the region by 2035. Our tree-planting programmes will support pockets parks, parks and spaces across the West Midlands.

Too many people have no gardens and too little access to parks and open space. We will set a target for every person to be within a 15-minute walk of a green space and publish a plan for new spaces to deliver this. As part of this we will back new local pocket parks and spaces and plans such as the Duddeston Viaduct skypark. We will use GrETHA to ensure new green spaces are created through new developments.

We should have pride in our green and public spaces. Litter degrades the environment too. So, we will work with community groups, councils, business and public agencies and bodies to have a major campaign of 'Pride in Our Places' - a huge cleaning up of the West Midlands with litter clearance, action on fly-tipping and removing graffiti. The clearing up will not only help with our welcome for the Commonwealth Games but help create a lasting change too in how we cherish our spaces.

We will work with citizens to establish a Charter for Nature in the West Midlands, enshrining a commitment to create landscapes rich in wildlife, plant for the future, protect and enhance nature, enhance biodiversity and improve access to nature. As part of this we will seek to become the first bee-friendly region, establishing bee corridors across the West Midlands and planting roadside wildflower banks.

We will develop a West Midlands walking network, similar to the Capital Ring and London Loop walks in London. These are walks connecting up green spaces and heritage with signage and maps. Our 'West Midlands Walks' network will be our version and enable people to explore their region and get active.

9. Clean air.

Polluted air is set to cut short the lives of 15,000 people in the West Midlands over the next decade unless we act. We can't let this happen. We need cleaner air for longer lives. So, we will campaign for a new national Clean Air Act with powers and new ways to tackle air pollution in our region, issue precautionary air pollution alerts and pilot high visibility air quality monitoring in schools. Our plans to green transport such as our buses, increasing and using more renewable energy and more tree planting will help too.



FORMER FIREFIGHTER, NOBBY, IS BACKING LIAM

"Having spent time with Liam Byrne and walked the streets of Coventry with him, I know he is a man prepared to listen and communicate with our most vulnerable and homeless and understand the issues they face. The West Midlands needs a Mayor who can put this learning into practice to the benefit of our whole community and Liam Byrne is clearly up to that task."

SHELTER



A MAYOR TO MEET THE MOMENT

This is a moment of history for the West Midlands. Not one - but three - earthquakes have hit us: Covid, our departure from the European Union, and the declaration of a climate emergency. We need a Mayor and Combined Authority to meet these challenges. But today things are not working:

- We are not punching our weight on the national and international stage.
- People are disconnected from the Tory Mayor, most of whom can't name him or anything he's done.
- Delivery of projects is much too slow.
- The WMCA is going broke.
- Challenges for the future are not being addressed.

It is time we had a Mayor who meets the moment.

Our region has changed the world. So, this is no time to be prisoners of our modesty. It's time for us to be a leader again. We are the largest urban area outside of London. We must become the green workshop of the world.

We will use the world's race to net zero carbon to lead green Britain:

- Ahead of COP 26 in Glasgow, we will hold a COP-WM, to bring together the region behind a plan to become the first net zero carbon city-region in England.
- We will tell the 1.5 billion people watching the Commonwealth Games about our determination to lead the Green Industrial Revolution. We will also support a zero carbon Commonwealth Games.

- We will invite other city region leaders to join us in an annual 'Convention of the Midlands', to shape a 'Manifesto for Mercia' to showcase the mighty Midlands and develop a shared vision of where we need from Westminster.
- We will ask the Festival UK* 2022 (Festival of Britain) team to help organise a Made in the Midlands Expo to showcase our region's innovation and ingenuity - and our determination to lead the charge to end greenhouse gas pollution and deliver a 100% clean and green future.



National and global leadership is important. So is the leadership of our region. So, we will open up power structures to the voices of everyone in our region to battle the inequalities we face. We will:

Improve delivery structures.

- The West Midlands Combined Authority needs to be more effective. So, we will:
- Improve the oversight of the Mayor, by reviewing the portfolio system for council leaders' to improve collaborative working and focus on the region's long-term challenges together with sign off for constitutional required decisions.
- Create a new operational Cabinet of City and Borough Champions, drawn from the elected councillors of WMCA authorities to provide week-to-week operational political leadership to speed-up delivery of key projects in their areas.

Gender balanced WMCA and equality.

We will ask this Cabinet to be diverse and gender balanced, and the second in command, the Deputy Mayor, will be a woman.

- We will publish a Women's Manifesto to set out with clarity our policies in this manifesto, so that a Labour Mayor can be held accountable for delivery on gender equality.
- We will open up power structures to deliver equality to all parts of society, use digital technologies to transform transparency and involvement, undertake equalities audits on all policies and campaign for our institutions to reflect our region in diversity and gender.
- Assess WMCA recruitment practises to ensure fair chances for women and other under-represented groups securing jobs at the WMCA using anonymised application forms. This will help encourage applicants from Black and ethnic minority women.

- We will maintain and deepen the progress we have made against homophobia by supporting Pride in all cities, boroughs and towns, support young LGBT+ people and ambassadors from minority backgrounds and aim for the WMCA and its bodies to attain Stonewall's top employer rating which Transport for London achieved.

- Unlike the Tory Mayor, I won't be silent on calling for a pay rise for nurses or for free school meals to stop kids going hungry during the holidays or ending the zero hours culture. I will stand up for people in our region not stand by like the Tory Mayor.

Young people and power.

- We are the youngest region in the UK. We work with the Youth Combined Authority to boost its role and have a much greater involvement in the policies and decisions and to hold the Mayor to account. As Mayor I will meet regularly with the YCA and young people in all parts of our region. I will work with the WMCA leaders and YCA to agree a process for electing, nominating or electing a Youth Mayor, or Youth Mayors and to boost the role of the YCA.

Women's safety.

- We will prioritise the safety of women and girls and ensure that this is reflected in all decisions taken by the WMCA such as designing transport, and we will assess and publish the state of funding and access to women's refuges and work with the Police & Crime Commissioner to further resource action on domestic abuse.

Tackling hate.

- We will campaign for street harassment to be made a crime, and back Labour Police & Crime Commission's Simon Foster's campaign to make misogyny a hate crime and record it as such, and campaign to increase the sentence for rape from the current minimum five years and for a 'Whole Life Tariff' for anyone found guilty of 'abduction and sexual assault and murder of a stranger'.

- We will back the Labour Police & Crime Commissioner in prioritising action on hate crime, calling out those that seek to divide and spread hate, and adopting the APPG on Muslims definition of Islamophobia, the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism and piloting hate crime action plans with employers.

To make a fairer, more equal West Midlands and improve opportunities we will:

Economic & Climate Justice Commission.

To help the long-term future of the region, we will create a standing Economic & Climate Justice Commission, that includes voices from the trade unions, faith leaders, civil society, co-operators, climate campaigners, and diversity organisations and business voices, to ensure we have the best minds in the region working on long term plans for a just transition and the common good.

A Co-operative WMCA.

We will commit to co-operative principles and become a co-operative combined authority and promote a co-operative city region, aiming to treble the size of the co-operative economy. Co-operatives, mutuals and social enterprises give people a stake and help keep the pound local and we need more in our region. Co-ops are part of a huge expansion we want to see in community wealth building, creating community assets, community businesses and keep the pound local in our communities.

Good employment charter.

We will join with the Metro-Mayors of Manchester and Liverpool, and Labour's candidate in West Yorkshire to sign the Good Employment Charter to increase good quality jobs with opportunities for people to progress, good employment standards, employee voice, trade union representation, paying a Real Living Wage. We want to make the West Midlands a Real Living Wage region, which is backed by Citizens UK and trade unions. We want to embed Karl George's 'RACE Code' in procurement and ensure public contracts go to firms doing the right thing.

- We will bring together business, flagship cultural organisations, grassroots companies, and workforce representatives to develop a 'Freelance Charter' to improve life for the self-employed and other freelance workers in our region, particularly for the many people working in the cultural and entertainment sector.
- We will campaign for reform of business rates which are not working and do not provide a fair playing field for high street businesses and manufacturers alike compared with online businesses.
- We will seek to expand Black Pound Day and bring the Black Business Show to the West Midlands, alongside using the new Prosperity Team to develop a roadmap for boosting the West Midlands pound into ethnic minority owned businesses.
- We will consult with Labour's Police & Crime Commissioner and third sector organisations to identify a strategy to strengthen advice services across the region as proposed by Citizen's UK.
- We will join together with other Metro-Mayors to put forward a strong collaborative voice for our great cities and regions, pressing government to devolve powers and money and push for a 'Cabinet of Mayors' to listen fully to our voices and act



A Mayor seen and working in every community.

As Mayor I will hold regular Mayoral Question Times in each authority area and hold citizens assemblies to have ongoing 'climate conversations' on how we make the changes needed ahead.

Digital transparency.

Using digital technologies, we will transform the transparency of the Mayoralty and open up power, drawing on the experience of political parties around the world which use deliberative democracy technology to help organise participatory planning and participatory budgeting. We will ensure our GrETHA as a pioneer of this approach.

Changing how we deliver: The West Midlands Combined Authority is going broke.

The Tory Mayor is leaving more than a £1 billion deficit in the investment programme. The WMCA's own Medium-Term Financial Plan confessed alternative long-term funding needs to be found. Nor has the investment programme been re-prioritised in the light of the climate emergency. We will stop the drift and get a grip. We will establish an emergency budget within the first three months of taking office to get the finances back on track and to take the immediate decisions needed to secure the recovery.

As part of this we will conduct a zero-based spending review to align the forward investment programme with the action needed to become Britain's first net zero carbon region, reviewing all expenditure through a net zero carbon lens.

Alongside the WMCA, we will invite the local authorities, LEPs, and other local spending bodies in the region to conduct a zero-based review of their own capital programmes and through a net zero carbon lens. This will enable us to map the entirety of public spending and assets in the region to create a super-efficient 'Total Capital' approach to public spending, understanding what we have and join up expenditure to have maximum benefit.

- We will commit to not introduce a council tax precept to a least 2023 and convene a panel of experts to examine the alternatives to raising a precept - any precept will be a last resort and only be considered if alternatives such as additional government funding, land value capture, public sector reform gain share fund, public sector pension fund investment, business rate supplement and social investment are found not to be feasible.
- To support our delivery, we will support the Cabinet with a Mayor's Delivery & Strategy Unit, which will provide transparent online reports on what is taking place.
- We will overhaul data analytics – establishing an Economic and Net Zero Observatory, deploying the approach pioneered by Kate Raworth and now the City of Amsterdam, to track progress toward a set of rights and duties that we want for all citizens of the region, matched by limits on the environmental resources we consume.



Grasping the thorny issues

The Mayor can and should be a leader, using the convening power to bring organisations together to broker shared approach to thorny issues. These will include:

Making Homelessness History:

We will build on the work led by Jean Templeton to align organisations including those working with grassroots groups through a commitment to collaborate to end rough sleeping within the Mayoral term and establish a Homelessness Bill of Rights, including a charter of rights, that respects the homeless as people in need not criminals.

We will establish a common set of rules across the West Midlands to tackle poor quality housing, like Birmingham, including for HMOs and supported accommodation, undertake a crackdown on dodgy landlords working with the Police & Crime Commissioner and press developers to deliver better quality of homes including supported housing.

Cladding Scandal:

We will help broker a road map and solutions for the cladding scandal arising from Grenfell, which the government's recent announcement failed to credibly address including a proper funding settlement to fully cover the remedies, clarity on the scope of liabilities, pooling insurance premiums and group buying of remediations to keep costs lower.

Social care:

We will convene councils, NHS, health organisations and the care sector to hold an 'Our Future: Social Care' inquiry into the lessons learned from Covid and on the long term needs for our region to help create a roadmap for implementing Unison's Ethical Care Charter and GMB's Ethical Home Care Commissioning Charter - we will work with other Mayors around the country to lobby for the resources to turn this roadmap into a reality.

COVID:

The Covid pandemic has shaped all our lives. To remember the many Covid victims across our region we will back a memorial to those who have died and to support their families in the West Midlands and ensure the failings do not happen again, call for the government to hold a full judge-led public inquiry into Covid.

Hospitals:

Campaign for a new hospital at the Arden Cross development in Solihull and serving East Birmingham. The proposal will form part of transformational new gateway for East Birmingham and north Solihull to include: a new push for the £1 billion East Birmingham Metro line, connecting Birmingham's poorest communities to the airport, the new HS2 stations, NEC and the city centre; three thousand new homes, including key worker housing at the NEC site; and an intensive-skills and retraining programme for local residents to access new jobs including NHS jobs.

Campaign for a proper pay rise for our nurses.

Bring the Centre for Defence Medicine and Invictus Sports together to develop a centre of excellence for treatment of injuries at the new hospital at Arden Cross, and offer to work with the Invictus Games and Commonwealth Games legacy team to create a world class centre for disability sports.

Refresh the Armed Forces Covenant across the West Midlands to ensure the rights of ex-servicemen and women and their families are supported not simply in theory but in practice and they are treated with fairness and respect

Childcare:

We are the youngest region and our children need the best start, we will establish an inquiry into how we can build a Scandinavian-style full-time childcare system.

CARER FROM WALSALL, ZOE, IS BACKING LIAM

This election I am voting for Liam Byrne as I want a Mayor who celebrates all that the West Midlands has to offer. I want the transport networks invested in so local travel is easy and we are all much more connected. I want better housing and investment in greener industry so local people can live healthier lives and our green spaces stay green. I want education and children's services to be prioritised as this is our future generations. And I want money generated in the West Midlands to go back into the West Midlands.

OUR PLEDGES: A NEW FUTURE FOR THE HEART OF BRITAIN

Our plan - the People's Plan - will help make our region proud, get people back to work and secure the resources we deserve. We can't go back to life as it was before the pandemic, where only those doing well had the chance to do better still. We deserve a better future. Our plan will improve lives for everyone. As we build back from COVID, we will make the West Midlands stronger, fairer, safer and greener - and we will do it together.

Get back on our feet, build a recovery that works for all and win our fair share

Our region has been the hardest hit by Covid yet we've received amongst the worst support. The Tory Mayor has failed to get the resources we need, and the West Midlands has been short-changed for too long. Residents are poorer, less safe and the quality of life is falling. Women, black and minority ethnic communities and young people have been affected disproportionately. We will change this with a one-region recovery to build back stronger.

- 1. Ensure everyone in every corner of the region is vaccinated as fast as possible, get weekly vaccination data published for every council area and use trusted community pharmacies to surge vaccination capacity in lower vaccination rate areas.**
- 2. Strengthen the West Midlands Jobs Taskforce to coordinate emergency action on jobs and target the creation of more new jobs overall not simply replacing those lost, which is the Tory Mayor's plan.**
- 3. Establish a new training and skills programme for people in the West Midlands to secure the 200,000 green manufacturing and trades jobs that can help power our region again and free retraining for workers who have lost jobs.**
- 4. Set up a cross-party team to press for every penny we deserve from the 287 government Covid support programmes and assess the economic impacts on business, hard hit sectors and communities to make our case, press for our fair share of the national £431bn capital funding, and help push for the relocation of public bodies, agencies and government departments to our region.**
- 5. Establish an emergency budget within the first three months of taking office and take the immediate decisions needed to secure the recovery and deliver our commitment to invest in young people.**
- 6. Establish a WMCA Prosperity Team to back our goal of trebling the co-op sector and help the public sector drive contracts to local firms - and with a taskforce of procurement officers, lead an emergency audit of contracts to see which can be moved locally fast.**
- 7. Create a 'Right to Food' and a target for zero hunger and use our emergency budget to route more funding to food banks and community pantries for essential equipment and supplies and then draw up a food strategy as London has done, to improve the food system in the West Midlands, including availability of good, affordable, healthy food.**

Make our green future

We must act on climate change and we can make our green future. It's our chance to establish the West Midlands as a leader once again, driving the Green Industrial Revolution:

- 8. Go green faster, become the UK's first zero-carbon region, accelerating plans to reach net-zero from 2041 to the mid-2030s and to lead green Britain.**

9. **Convene a COP-WM to bring together the key players in the region to reset our mission as the first net zero region and become the green workshop of the world.**
10. Integrate and consolidate Mayoral delivery organisations and programmes into a new Mayoral structure GrETHA (Green Energy, Housing, Transport Agency) to drive plans on green energy, transport and housing, scale and speed the transition and secure the green jobs.
11. **Equip GrETHA with the Combined Authority's £500m unspent borrowing capacity and increase this fund through issuing West Midlands Green Bonds.**
12. GrETHA will agree a delivery plan with each city or borough in the combined authority to enshrine an integrated delivery programme for the WMCA in each council area.
13. **Over the Mayoral term use WMCA development funding to build on brownfield first not the greenbelt - let's have the homes we need without losing the places we love.**
14. Double the building of truly affordable homes and ensure all new homes meet green standards so they are warm and have low energy bills.
15. **Pilot a new young person and key workers affordable home ownership scheme as devised by Sir David Garrard.**
16. Press government to devolve retrofit, energy efficiency and the successor to the Green Homes Grant funding so we can retrofit existing homes - and we will set up co-operative retrofits to deliver the programme and to create local jobs.
17. **Cherish our green spaces by reinvesting in local parks and nature and set a target for every person to be within a 15 min walk of a green space and publish a plan for new spaces to deliver this, including pockets parks and plans such as the Duddeston Viaduct Skypark**
18. We will work with community groups, councils, business and public agencies and bodies to have a major campaign of Pride in Our Places - a huge cleaning up of the West Midlands with litter clearance, action on fly-tipping and removing graffiti.
19. **Increase tree canopy cover to a gold standard of 25% - a big step up from current ambitions and plant one to two trees for every person in the region by 2035.**
20. Campaign for a new national Clean Air Act with powers and new ways to tackle air pollution in our region, issue precautionary air pollution alerts; and pilot high visibility air quality monitoring in schools.
21. Deliver a 10-year plan to make our transport system affordable, safe, green, frequent and on time.
22. **Run a 'Make it Here' review to assess our transport and housing programmes to see where we can grow manufacturing in the Midlands - making the green vehicles, jet zero planes, green trains, e-bikes, bikes and green homes.**
23. **Take the 'tube map' for the West Midlands and set up a West Midlands Project Speed to see how we can accelerate delivery from 2040s to 2030s to stop the delay to transport programmes that the Tory Mayor has overseen.**
24. Drive forward with the very light rail programme in Coventry and seek a goal of fleet of 100 shuttles as well as assess options to use for delivering the East Birmingham and Solihull Tram proposal which has been put on hold under the Tory Mayor.
25. **To boost demand by making travel easier, we will seek to introduce a programme to freeze fares on buses, reduce the cost of passes and weekly fare caps.**
26. Integrate the transport system across all modes, upgrade the Swift travel pass with simple, smart ticketing and set a daily fare cap for multiple journeys commencing with buses and expand to other modes.
27. **We will ask for bus funding to be devolved to the region and assess the potential to introduce bus franchising, rapidly completing the TfWM assessment already underway to investigate the potential of using the powers of the 2017 Bus Act to develop Transport for London style services.**

28. Judge the way forward on the fastest path to deliver our goals for increasing direct bus services and re-connecting cut-off communities including cross-city links in Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry and across the Black Country with fast, affordable routes from West Bromwich and Walsall so that by 2024 40% of people in the West Midlands benefit.
- 29. Bring forward a network of electric and green bus routes, with Coventry buses all electric by 2025, and aim for half of all West Midlands buses electric or hydrogen by 2025 so that 40% of the mileage is zero emissions by 2025.**
30. Agree active travel plans with each council, introduce a walking and cycling network across the region to double cycling levels by 2025 and with 50% of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030, and appoint an active travel champion.
- 31. Update the local industrial strategy to underpin the 2030s net zero target, link with a skills plan to close the net zero skills gap and align industry, supply chains, unions and universities to provide an ambitious and achievable long-term road map.**
32. Urge train companies move to electric or hydrogen trains, seek to build these in the Midlands and seek powers and the funding from the government to run the rail franchises.
- 33. Assess setting up a green leasing company to buy and lease green vehicles - electric vehicles, e-taxis, e-bikes and e-cargo bikes - made locally, to help local delivery drivers, gig workers and taxis go green and audit the major vehicle fleets across business and public bodies to determine the best way these can be turned green more swiftly.**
34. Through GrETHA target creating one of the best EV (electric vehicles) charging networks by 2030, and seek an injection of government funding, ensure every new home and commercial development funded by the WMCA includes new EV charging points and work to overcome a developing two-tier system where only some people benefit from low cost home EV charging.
- 35. Use the 1.5 billion eyes on our region for the Commonwealth Games to kickstart a drive to attract the world's best clean tech firms and green investors and provide a springboard for green exports.**
36. Conduct a zero-based spending review and assess through a carbon lens to align the investment programme with action to become Britain's first net zero carbon region.
- 37. Lay the foundations for turning at least one brownfield industrial site into a green industry zones in each council area and pump prime investment to increase renewable energy production and business use.**
38. Campaign to unlock the fair share of government funding for electric battery gigafactories to secure a West Midlands gigafactory to build batteries for the electric vehicles (EVs) we need.
- 39. Commission the region's Chambers of Commerce to support local firms bidding for contracts, de-risk the Chambers support for exporters by asking government to guarantee a 10-year contract for export support services.**
40. Working with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Chambers of Commerce to improve business support services particularly for advice on buying, selling, exporting and local sourcing green products.
- 41. Initiate a West Midlands Banking Inquiry to assess the case for creating a bank in the West Midlands with a lending capacity of £500m to support local industry.**
42. Work with our universities and colleges to hold a review into setting up a West Midlands Innovation Agency to provide R&D advice to business and help the leap to net zero carbon.
- 43. Urge the West Midlands LGPS (WMCA) pension fund to divest from fossil fuels.**

Back our young people

We are the youngest region and we should be the best place in Britain to be young.

44. Set up a West Midlands Skills & Learning Agency to work with colleges, universities and businesses to double apprentice numbers, reboot a careers service, start an UCAS-style system for apprenticeships to connect young people to opportunities, and establish a major programme of work placements for 18-30 year olds working with Citizens UK to develop this.

45. Back up our young people and equip councils to rehire youth workers back in every neighbourhood funded through the £12 million temporary windfall of savings from the Combined Authority's borrowing - and put in place a 10-year plan to seek to make this permanent.

46. Set up a new 'one-stop pot' bringing together different funding bodies to enable fast track funding for new young people's community facilities like sports, music, arts, culture and training.

47. We will consult with council leaders and council taxpayers on a long-term solution for reduced or free travel for young people – and as a first step we will go further than the current half price travel for 16-18 year olds and introduce free weekend bus travel for 16-18 year olds at the earliest opportunity.

48. Phase in an 'Opportunity Pass' for 16-18 year olds for travel, culture and sports opportunities enhancing the Swift travel card which includes the youth travel concession, and work with sports and cultural organisations to bring forward a range of discounts or free entry to places, spaces and events.

49. Work with other Metro-Mayors to propose that the government re-creates the funded Youth Jobs Guarantee and press the government to remodel the failed Kickstarter programme into a Green Kickstarter.

50. Negotiate flexibility of DWP and DfE programmes to meet West Midlands' needs (a) new green jobs fund with job government subsidy (b) apprenticeship guarantee for 18-25 year olds (c) right to retrain for unemployed and part-time workers (d) relax the JSA 16 hour rule (e) devolve funding pots - Shared Prosperity Fund, National Retraining Scheme, National Skills Fund, unspent apprenticeship budget and fair portion of the capital budget.

51. Hold a review of youth enterprise to help young entrepreneurs set up businesses

52. Set up an inquiry into how to rebuild mental services for young people.

53. Drive the region's cultural sector to involve young people in shaping development and delivery of cultural initiatives and events, which bring people together and involves the diversity of our region.

54. Use the Commonwealth Games to create a Young Commonwealth Leaders programme to train hundreds of young people to become community leaders.

55. Establish a Mayor's Community Volunteers scheme to increase the number and range of volunteering opportunities for young people including planting trees.

56. Work with councils to develop a playing pitch strategy and pool funding for this with a programme aiming for 30 new pitches in five years.

57. Work with the WMCA leaders and Youth Combined Authority to agree a process for electing, nominating or electing Youth Mayors, boost the role of the YCA and work and meet regularly with the YCA and with our region's Youth Parliament representatives.

58. Back the YCA's idea to establish young environmental champions to build awareness of how we change to be green and how people can benefit from the opportunities ahead

59. Campaign for the restoration of housing benefit for the under-25s and government to end the policy of 'no recourse to public funds' which creates homelessness and undertake a review into an acceleration of pathways out of temporary accommodation.

60. Ask every school governing body to consider a twinning relationship with a school in a community that is different to build understanding and develop school councils.

Support stronger safer communities and rich community life

We love the West Midlands and will support all our communities to be safe and strong and build on that one silver lining people told us that they wanted to hold on to from lockdown -that incredible surge in community spirit.

61. Working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, we will surge in an extra 450 community police officers to boost police numbers in every neighbourhood to fight rising crime and make our streets safer.

62. Support councils in creating more school streets for safe travel to schools and set up a local road safety fund for local councillors to make neighbourhoods safer and curb dangerous driving and speeding cars.

63. Press for new powers from government for local enforcement for a range of driving offences and invest fines into road safety, seek devolution of Vehicle Exercise Duty (VED) paid in the region so we can do more and ask for powers for councils to establish 20mph zones more effectively and economically.

64. Staff a Culture and Sport team to kickstart a 'Decade of Togetherness' using the Coventry City of Culture and Commonwealth Games in 2022, through to the 2030 World Cup which we will campaign to host, bring other sports events to the region, draw up a calendar of events and festivals supported by a new charitable fund to back these to celebrate heroes, heritage, history, food, culture and cultures, veterans, St George's Day and special occasions – and ensure the team works with BECTU, Musicians Union, Equity and industry partners to maximise impact.

65. Establish a night-time economy champion to work with venues on re-opening and to promote the nightlife in our region as we look to receive visitors through the City of Culture, Festival UK* 2022 and Commonwealth Games.

66. Create a 'Forgotten Places Fund' to restore derelict and disused areas with pocket parks and public art, a 'Pride of Place Fund' to support local high streets and markets, a 'One Stop Pot' to support arts, sports and culture and move the Mayor's Community Weekend to coincide with the Great British Get Together.

67. Assist our councils in backing and creating museums, visitor attractions and creative hubs that put our culture on the map such as peoples' music: Heavy Metal, Two-Tone, bhangra and contemporary music, as well as Shakespeare, Tolkien and Science, Innovation and Design.

68. Campaign to boost BBC digital and media production in our region, and working with trade unions, Create Central and industry partners, fast-track plans for new film and digital content studios in Digbeth.

69. Set up 'Community Innovation Districts' to help us reopen vacant buildings and shops as new community hubs and space for business start-ups.

70. Develop a walking network, 'West Midlands Walks', similar to the Capital Ring in London, connecting up green spaces and heritage with signage and designated routes

71. Work with citizens to establish a Charter for Nature in the West Midlands enshrining a commitment to create landscapes rich in wildlife, plant for the future, protect and enhance nature, enhance biodiversity and improve access to nature.

72. Become first bee-friendly region, establish bee corridors across the West Midlands and plant roadside wildflower banks.

Confront the challenges and meet the moment

I will be a different kind of Mayor, working in all our communities and standing up for all our communities. I will drive fairness and equality through everything we do, and I'll be publishing a women's manifesto so that as Mayor I will be accountable. Unlike the Tory Mayor, I won't be silent on calling for a pay rise for nurses or for free school meals to stop kids going hungry during the holidays. Together we can end the zero hours culture and support a welcoming, fair West Midlands.

- 73. Improve the oversight of the Mayor, by revising the portfolio system for Leaders' to improve collaborative working and focus on the region's long-term challenges together with sign off for constitutional required decisions.**
74. Create a new operational Cabinet of City and Borough Champions, drawn from the elected councillors of WMCA authorities to provide week-to-week operational political leadership to speed-up delivery of key projects in their areas.
- 75. Open up power structures to deliver equality for all parts of society, use digital technologies to transform transparency and involvement, undertake equalities audits on all policies and campaign for our institutions to reflect our region.**
76. Ensure the WMCA Cabinet is diverse and gender balanced, and the second in command, the Deputy Mayor, will be a woman.
- 77. Work with the Police & Crime Commissioner to prioritise action on hate crime, calling out those that seek to divide and spread hate, and adopting the APPG on Muslims definition of Islamophobia, the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism and piloting hate crime action plans with employers.**
78. Prioritise the safety of women and girls and ensure this is reflected in all decisions taken by the WMCA such as designing transport, assess and publish the state of funding and access to women's refuges and work with the Police & Crime Commissioner to further resource action on domestic abuse.
- 79. Campaign for street harassment to be made a crime, make misogyny a hate crime and record it, increase the sentence for rape from the current minimum of five years, add a 'Whole Life Tariff' for anyone found guilty of 'abduction and sexual assault and murder of a stranger'.**
80. Review recruitment practises testing anonymised application forms to give women and Black and ethnic minority backgrounds a fair chance of jobs at the WMCA.
- 81. Seek to expand Black Pound Day and bring the Black Business Show to the West Midlands, alongside use the new WMCA Prosperity Team to develop a roadmap for boosting the West Midlands pound into ethnic minority owned businesses.**
82. Consult with Labour's Police & Crime Commissioner and third sector organisations to identify a strategy to strengthen advice services across the region as proposed by Citizen's UK.
- 83. Support Pride in all cities, boroughs and towns, support young LGBT+ people and ambassadors from minority communities and seek that WMCA and its bodies attain Stonewall's top employer rating as Transport for London gained.**
84. Create an Economic & Climate Justice Commission with trade unions, faith leaders, civil society, business voices, co-ops, diversity organisations, and climate campaigners to work on long-term plans for the common good and a just transition.
- 85. Overhaul data analytics establishing an Economic & Net Zero Observatory to track progress for our region.**
86. Ask finance directors of the region to join a Working Group to map the entirety of region's public spending and assets to shape our collective impact on the places we serve
- 87. Be a Mayor that is seen and works in every community, hold regular Mayoral Question Times in each authority area and hold citizens assemblies to have ongoing 'climate conversations' on how we make the changes we need to make.**
88. Be a strong voice for the West Midlands, a voice as other regions like Manchester and London have, and invite leaders across the region to an annual 'Convention of the Midlands' to promote a shared vision.
- 89. Press the Festival UK* 2022 (Festival of Britain) team to help organise a Made in the Midlands Expo to showcase our region's innovation and ingenuity and we will support a zero carbon Commonwealth Games.**
90. Join together with other Metro-Mayors to put forward a strong collaborative voice for our great cities and regions pressing government to devolve powers and money and push for a 'Cabinet of Mayors' to listen fully to our voices and act.

91. To strengthen delivery, support the Cabinet with a Mayor's Delivery & Strategy Unit, which will provide transparent online progress reports on policy implementation and delivery.

92. Commit not to introduce a council tax precept to at least 2022/3 and convene a panel of experts to examine the alternatives to raising a precept - any precept will be a last resort and only be considered if alternatives such as additional government funding, land value capture, public sector reform gain share fund, public sector pension fund investment, business rate supplement and social investment are found not to be feasible.

93. Declare the WMCA a Co-operative Combined Authority.

94. Join with the Metro-Mayors of Manchester and Liverpool, and Labour's candidate in West Yorkshire to sign the Good Employment Charter to increase good jobs with opportunities for people to progress, good employment standards, employee voice, trade union representation, and paying a Real Living Wage – we want to make the West Midlands a Real Living Wage region, which is backed by Citizens UK and trade unions. We will embed Karl George's 'RACE Code' in procurement and ensure public contracts go to firms doing the right thing.

95. We will bring together business, flagship cultural organisations, grassroots companies, and workforce representatives to develop a 'Freelance Charter' to improve life for self-employed and other freelance workers in our region, particularly for those working in the cultural and entertainment sector.

96. Campaign for reform of business rates which are not working and do not provide a fair playing field for high street businesses and manufacturers alike compared with online businesses.

97. Pull all organisations in our region in the same direction including working with grassroots groups through a commitment to collaborate to end rough sleeping within the Mayoral term and establish a Homelessness Bill of Rights including a charter of rights, treating the homeless as people in need not criminals.

98. Establish a common set of rules across the West Midlands to tackle poor quality housing, like Birmingham is doing, including for HMOs and supported accommodation, undertake a crackdown on dodgy landlords working with the Police & Crime Commissioner and press developers to deliver better quality of homes including supported housing.

99. Campaign for a proper pay rise for our nurses.

100. Remember the many Covid victims with a memorial and to support their families in the West Midlands and ensure the failings do not happen again, call for the government to hold a full judge-led public inquiry into Covid.

101. Bring together councils, NHS, health organisations and the care sector to hold an 'Our Future: Social Care' inquiry into the lessons learned from Covid and on the long term needs for our region to help create a roadmap for implementing Unison's Ethical Care Charter and GMB's Ethical Home Care Commissioning Charter - we will work with other Metro-Mayors to lobby for the resources to turn this roadmap into a reality.

102. Campaign for a new hospital at the Arden Cross development in Solihull and serving East Birmingham.

103. Bring the Centre for Defence Medicine and Invictus Sports together to develop a centre of excellence for treatment of injuries at the new hospital at Arden Cross.

104. Refresh the Armed Forces Covenant across the West Midlands to ensure the rights of ex-servicemen and women and their families are supported not simply in theory but in practice and they are treated with fairness and respect.

105. Campaign for a road map and solutions for the cladding scandal arising from Grenfell, which the government's recent announcement failed to credibly address including a proper funding settlement to fully cover the remedies, clarity on the scope of liabilities, pooling insurance premiums and group buying of remediations to keep costs lower.

106. We are the youngest region and our children need the best start, so using the Mayor's convening power establish an inquiry into how we can build a Scandinavian-style full-time childcare system.















SOLICITOR FROM WOLVERHAMPTON, WARINDER, IS BACKING LIAM



















"I am supporting Liam Byrne for West Midlands Mayor because I know that I can trust him to bring prosperity to the Region."

30 TORY FAILURES IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

Our Tory Mayor promised the region would be the fastest growing, have zero youth unemployment and more punctual transport. Instead, life in our region is poorer, less safe and quality of life is falling. The rug has been pulled from under our young people while the Mayor is simply not delivering the basics. Meanwhile, the UK economy has been hit harder by COVID than our competitors – double that of Germany and three times that of the USA – and the West Midlands has been hit hardest of all.

13 WAYS WE'RE POORER	
	The West Midlands had a 21% fall in economic output in Q2 2020, the worst region - the second quarter in a row that our region experienced the largest drop in GDP ⁱ
	Exports in the West Midlands decreased by £2bn from Q1 2019 to Q1 2020 - this was before the impacts of COVID-19 and EU exit ⁱⁱ
	In the West Midlands, more than 1 in 5 people in a job, some 486,000 people, earn less than the real Living Wage ⁱⁱⁱ
	Of the neighbourhoods in the West Midlands nearly 1 in 5 are in the top 10% most deprived in England. This is increasing under the Mayor's watch ^{iv}
	The West Midlands high streets vacancy rate is up, with nearly 1 in 6 shops empty - much higher than London with nearly 1 in 10 empty and the South East with more than 1 in 9 ^v
	The digital divide is the UK's worst: more than 1 in 5 people in the West Midlands do not use the internet or have access (15% nationally) and nearly 1 in 4 more have limited use ^{vi}
	The Mayor's own document shows he's secured <u>just 5%</u> of the £3.2bn government investment for which he bid - the West Midlands has not got 95% of the money sought ^{vii}
	The British Business Bank's Future Fund for start-up funding has seen firms in London get nearly 29 times more than our region - our allocation is 3.4% of London's £590.6m ^{viii}
	Our cultural sector has received four times less than London for the government's Cultural Recovery Fund and per capita is the lowest support of any region in England ^{ix}
	West Midlands councils have 169,835 people claiming unemployment benefit, a rate of 9.2% (UK 6.2%) and 5 of the UK's top ten constituencies with most claimants ^x
	The West Midlands has less government investment per capita for Research & Development (R&D) than any region in the UK ^{xi}
	In our region in just six months in 2020 (Mar-Sep) the Trussell Trust foodbank network had already given out 108,295 food parcels - 45% more than the year before 168,886 ^{xii}
	In 2020 British Business Bank approvals for loan equity agreements for firms saw just 3% for West Midlands companies while London saw 15 times as many businesses benefit ^{xiii}
LESS SAFE	
	Police numbers in 2010 for the West Midlands were 8,537 and are now 6,846, a fall of nearly 1 in 5, or almost 2,000 police officers ^{xiv}

	Alongside fewer police officer than a decade ago, our region has seen violent crimes more than double over the last three years ^{xv}
	Over the last three years the West Midlands have also seen drug offences increase by more than a third and total recorded crime has gone up 18% ^{xvi}
QUALITY OF LIFE IS FALLING	
	Rising life expectancy has stalled in the UK for the first time in decades and under the Conservative Mayor's watch, healthy life expectancy has actually fallen in the West Midlands ^{xvii}
8 WAYS OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN FAILED	
	We're the youngest region in the UK, but our young people have had more funding cuts of any region - funding for young people's services have fallen 80% over the decade ^{xviii}
	A year of disrupted schooling can mean a child's lifetime's earning potential is cut by 4% - for our region's children that's £40,000 each and £21bn lost spending in our economy ^{xix}
	Apprenticeships in the West Midlands fell by 24,010, between 2015/16 and 2019/20, a pre-Covid drop of 39.4% and a fall of more than the average of England as whole ^{xx}
	The number of children in nurseries and schools on free school meals is more than 110,000 and has gone up from 19.7% to 22.1% in a year. England is 15% ^{xxi}
	In a survey on laptops for schools promised by the government all but one of schools in Birmingham said they did not have enough to go around ^{xxii}
	West Midlands councils have 33,660 18-24 year olds on unemployment benefit, a 11.1% rate (UK 8.7%) and 3 of the UK's top 10 constituencies with most 18-24 yr old claimants ^{xxiii}
	11.3% of the population of the West Midland, some 290,500 people, have no qualifications, an increase of 6,800 people (+2.4%) from 2018 to 2019 - for the UK this fell by 1.3% ^{xxiv}
	The number of homes built in the West Midlands for 'social rent', such as council houses, have fallen an incredible 85% since 2010 ^{xxv}
5 WAYS THE MAYOR IS NOT DELIVERING ON THE BASICS	
	The Conservative Mayor has overseen a delay in the spending of 26% of his £510m capital budget including a delay of £112m for transport and £20m for new housing ^{xxvi}
	Over the last year the Conservative Mayor's managed to build just a 1¼ mile of new tram track – snails cover five times more ground in a year than this ^{xxvii}
	Before COVID-19, our trains were growing more overcrowded and less reliable while bus passengers were down 15% and bus speeds down 10% over the decade ^{xxviii}
	The West Midlands is the worst for the number of EV charging points per electric vehicle ^{xxix}
	The West Midlands has among the highest levels of unmet cycling demand ^{xxx}

Liam Byrne

for **West Mids
Mayor**

 **Labour**
and **co-operative**

Promoted by Harry Taylor on behalf of Liam Byrne, both at
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