

# MIDLANDS ENGINE LEP PROFILES

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership  
(GBSLEP)



## Introduction

This document profiles the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) area, providing insight and data across key areas of the economy, namely through the five foundations of productivity outlined in the government’s industrial strategy: Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Places. Benchmarking is provided in the context of the Midlands Engine, allowing comparison between Greater Birmingham and Solihull and other LEP areas within the region.

## Greater Birmingham and Solihull

Greater Birmingham and Solihull is located at the heart of the Midlands Engine. Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP is the third small LEP area in the Midlands Engine (174,371 hectares) but the second largest Midlands Engine in terms of population. The area has a population of over 2 million and sources 944,000 jobs. The region is predominately urban, covering the metropolitan areas of Birmingham and Solihull, as well as East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Tamworth, Bromsgrove, Cannock Chase, Redditch and Wyre Forest.

The LEP’s vision is “for Greater Birmingham to take its place amongst the global elite: a truly global city region by 2030, one that establishes our leadership in innovation in our key sectors and leverages our international connections to the full” (Strategic Economic Plan 2016-2030).

Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP has identified five key sectors: Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering; Business, Professional & Financial Services; Creative Industries; Life Sciences; Energy technologies and services. GBSLEP has also identified five cross cutting themes of vital importance to the local economy: Business support and access to finance; digital; innovation and emerging technologies; skills; place-making.



The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP has worked with the Black Country LEP, the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP and the West Midlands Combined Authority in the development of a Local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands. The [West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy](#) (WM LIS) was launched on 16th May 2019, making it the first area in the country to publish a LIS.



**Contents**

This LEP profile collates insight within the five foundations of productivity: Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Places. A section is provided for each of these which can be navigated by the contents table below. A summary of key statistics is presented first, before the full foundation sections begin. Data relating to Greater Birmingham and Solihull is highlighted in blue in each graph. Infographics at the start of each section present key statistics in the area. The statistics are then contextualised in the graphs and text that follows.

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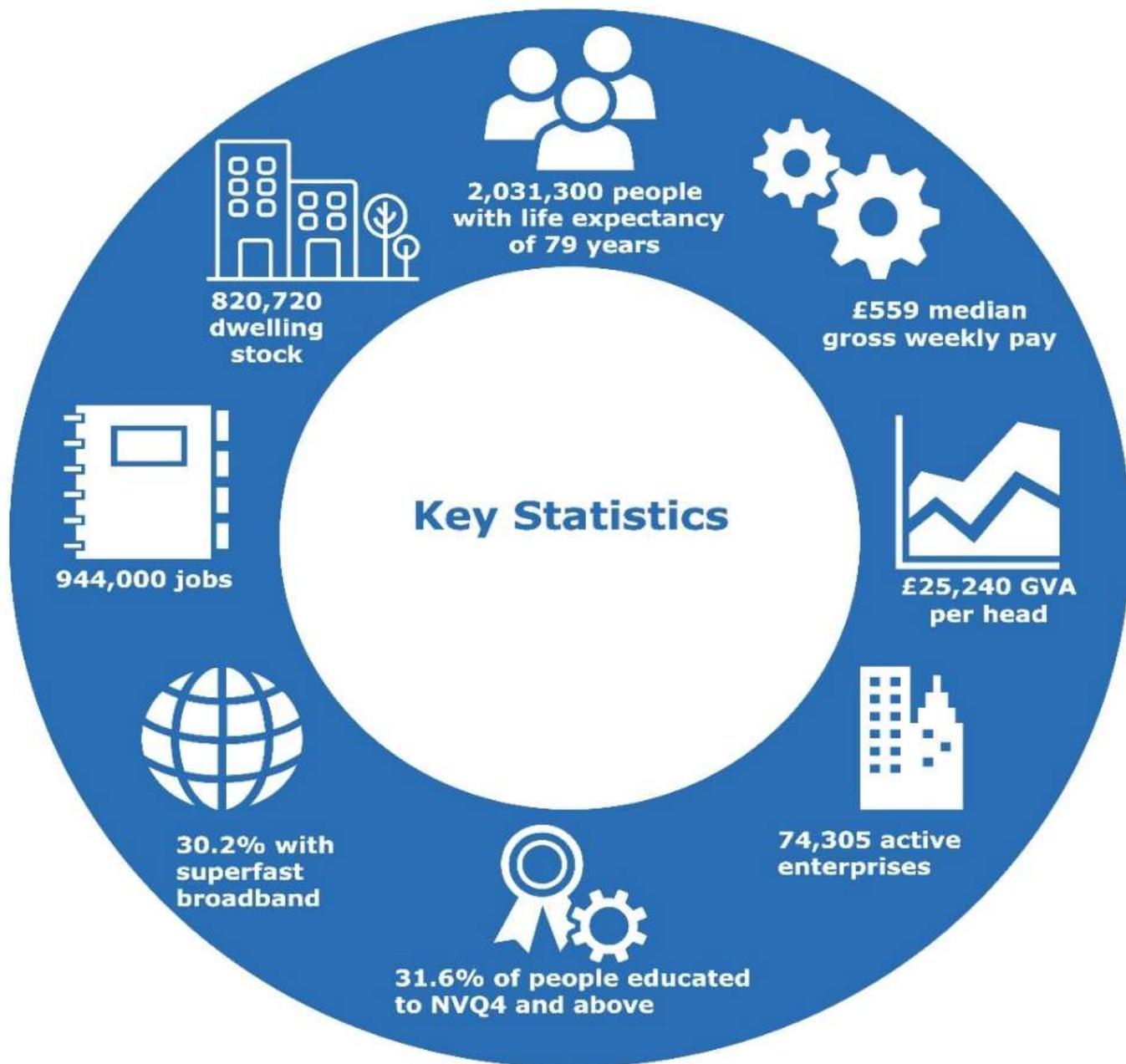
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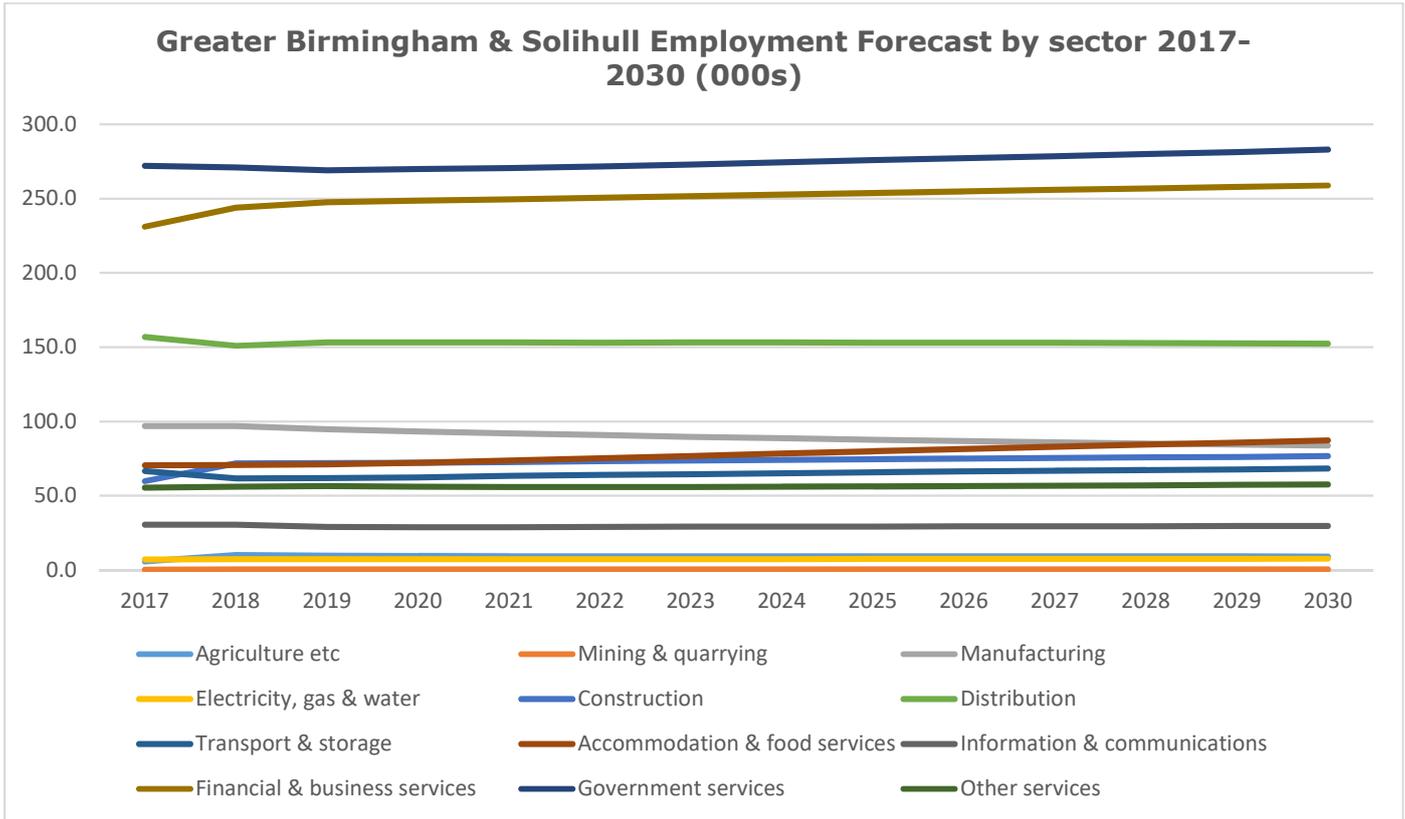
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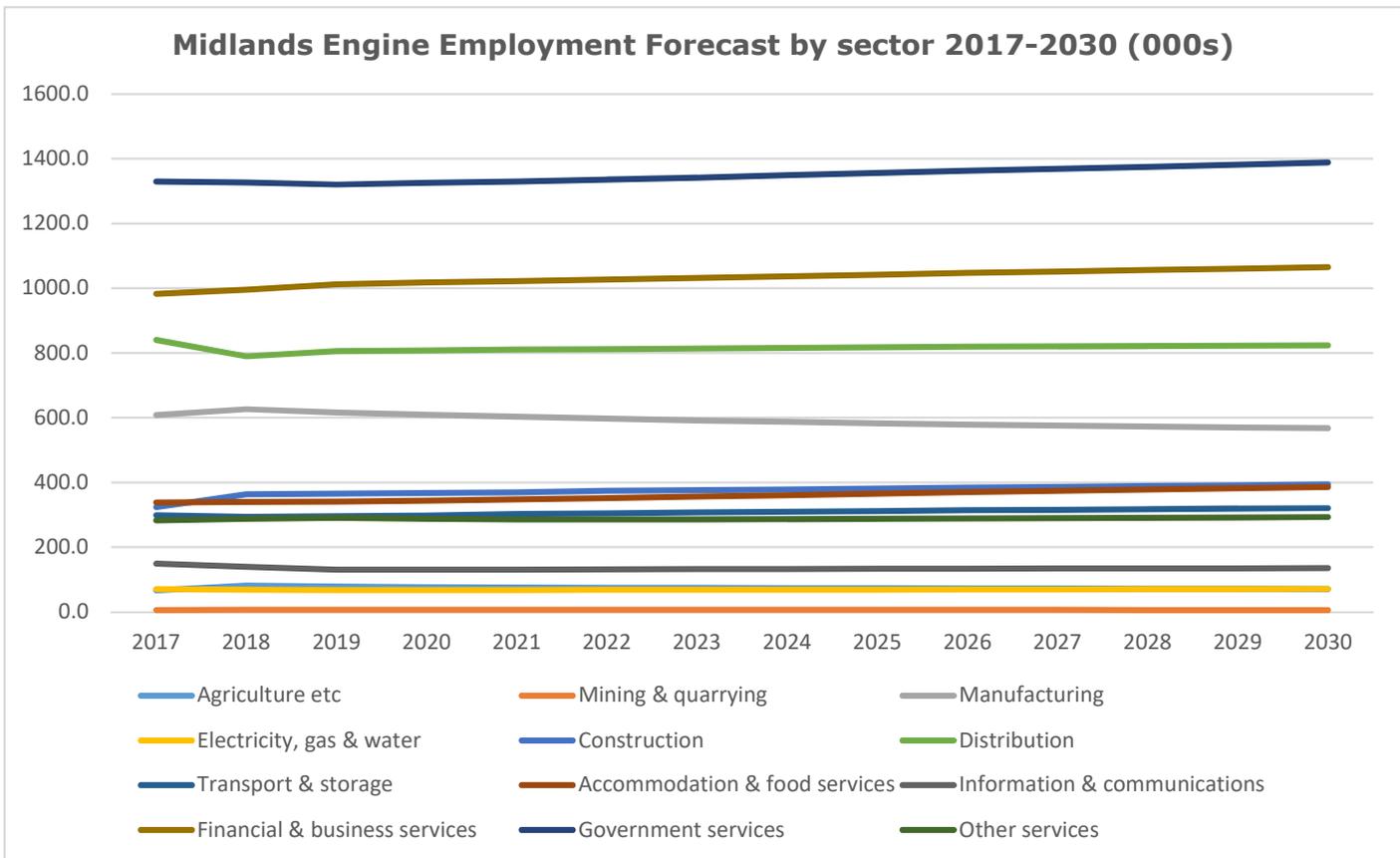
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Greater Birmingham and Solihull Key Statistics

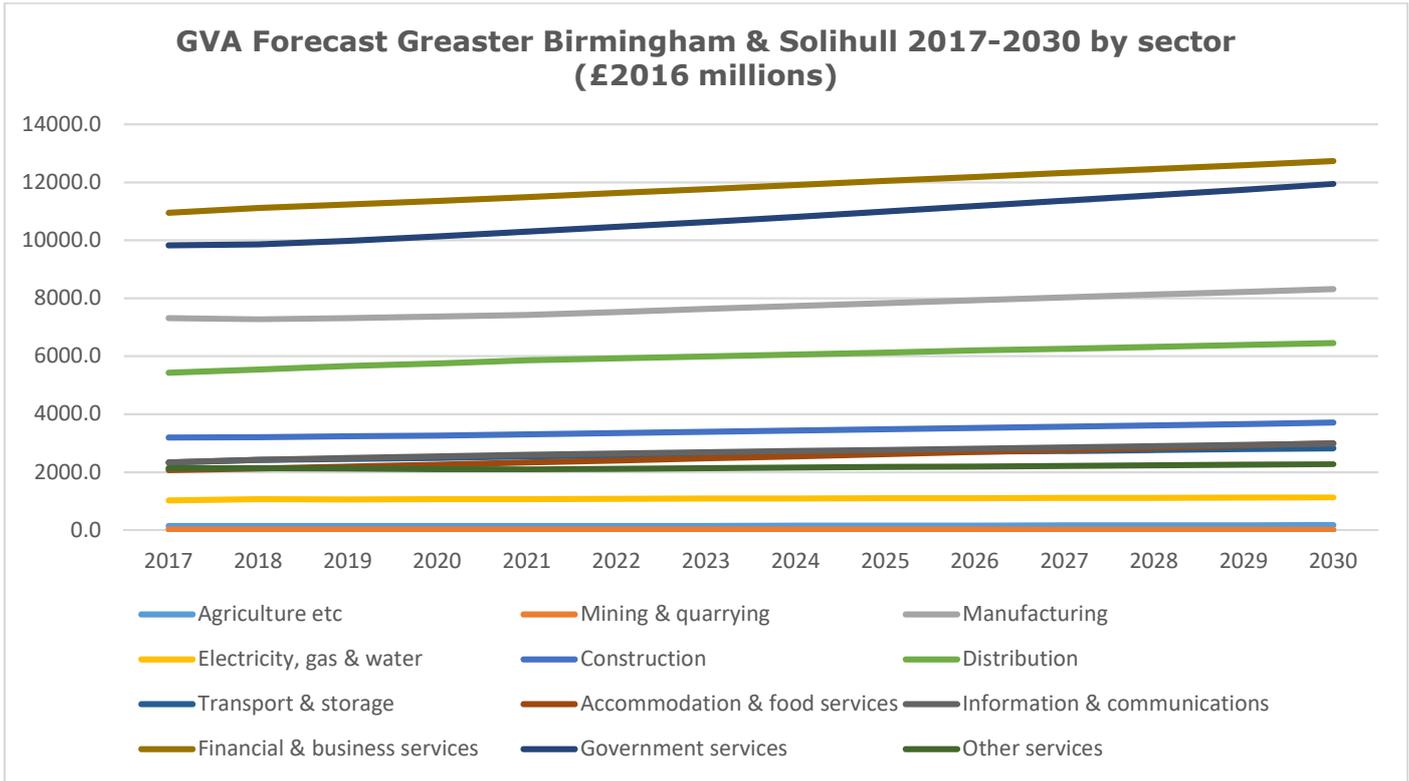




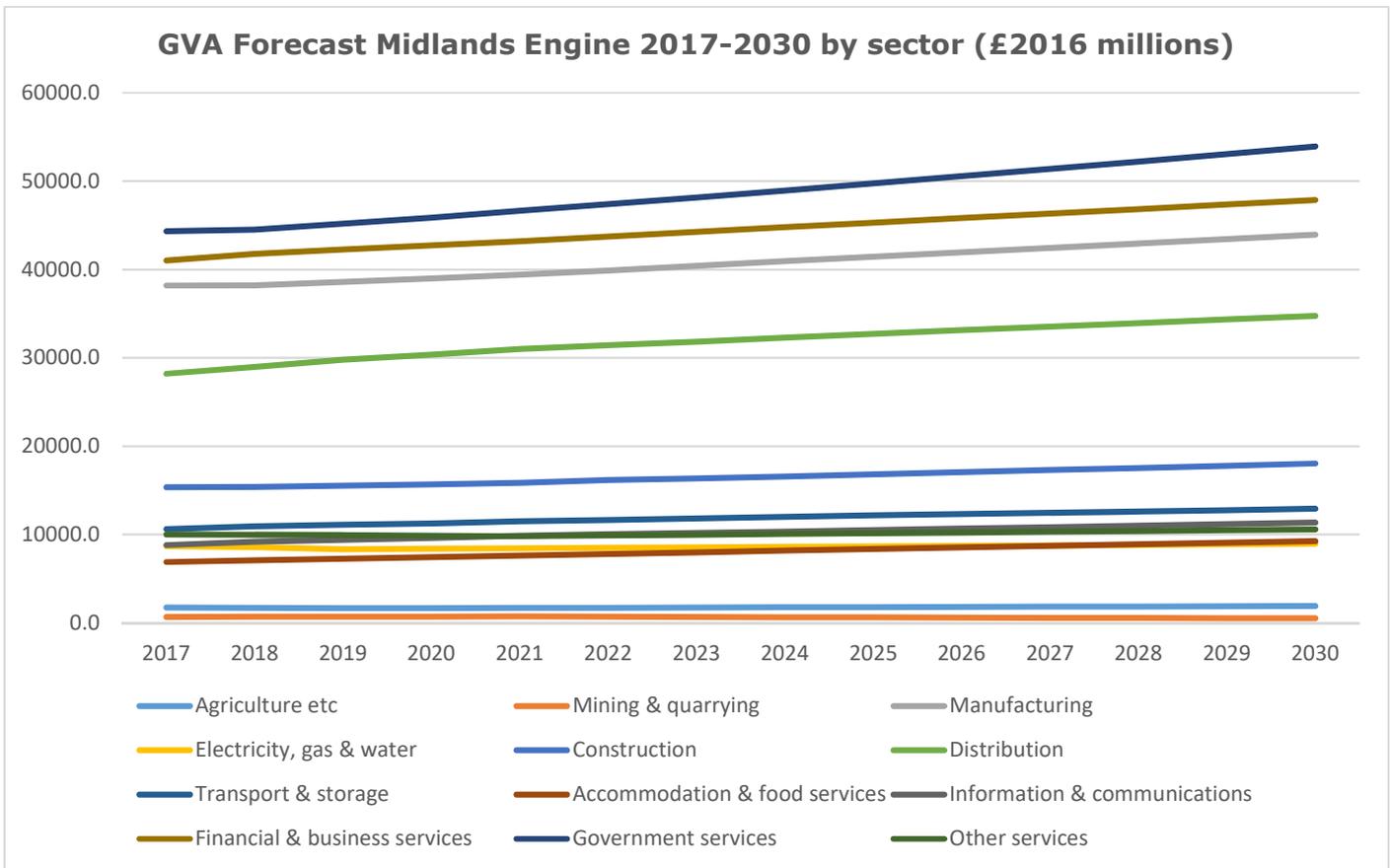
Source: Cambridge Econometrics (2019)



Source: Cambridge Econometrics (2019)



Source: Cambridge Econometrics (2019). Notes: Total GVA includes ownership of dwellings.



Source: Cambridge Econometrics (2019). Notes: Total GVA includes ownership of dwellings.

 **IDEAS**



**5  
UNIVERSITIES**



**53,590,192€  
SECURED  
THROUGH  
HORIZON 2020**



**£997,002,402  
SECURED  
THROUGH  
RESEARCH  
COUNCILS/  
INNOVATE UK**



**£451/FTE  
BUSINESS  
ENTERPRISE  
SPENDING ON  
R&D**

The UK’s Industrial Strategy stresses the importance of the UK being a global leader in science and research. Key policies include:

- a target to raise total R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027
- increasing the R&D tax credit rate to 12%
- the creation of the £725 million Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP brings many strengths in innovation to the Midlands Engine. The digital, advanced manufacturing, energy, healthcare and creative industries sectors are particularly renowned for being innovative. Local networks, universities, business parks and the City Centre Enterprise Zone underpin the area’s ability to develop and deploy new ideas. Figures 1-3 illustrate the strengths of and challenges faced by the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP in in translating its’ research excellence into industrial and commercial practices and, in turn, increased productivity within the Midlands Engine.

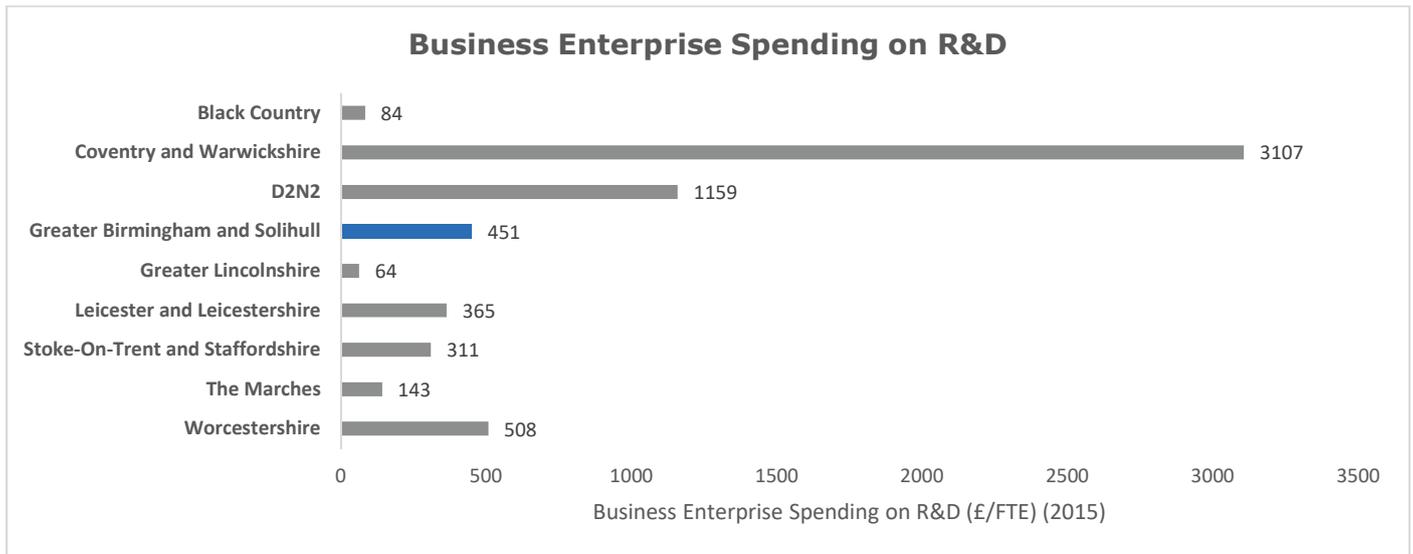


Figure 1 Source: BERD data analysis, Smart Specialisation Hub

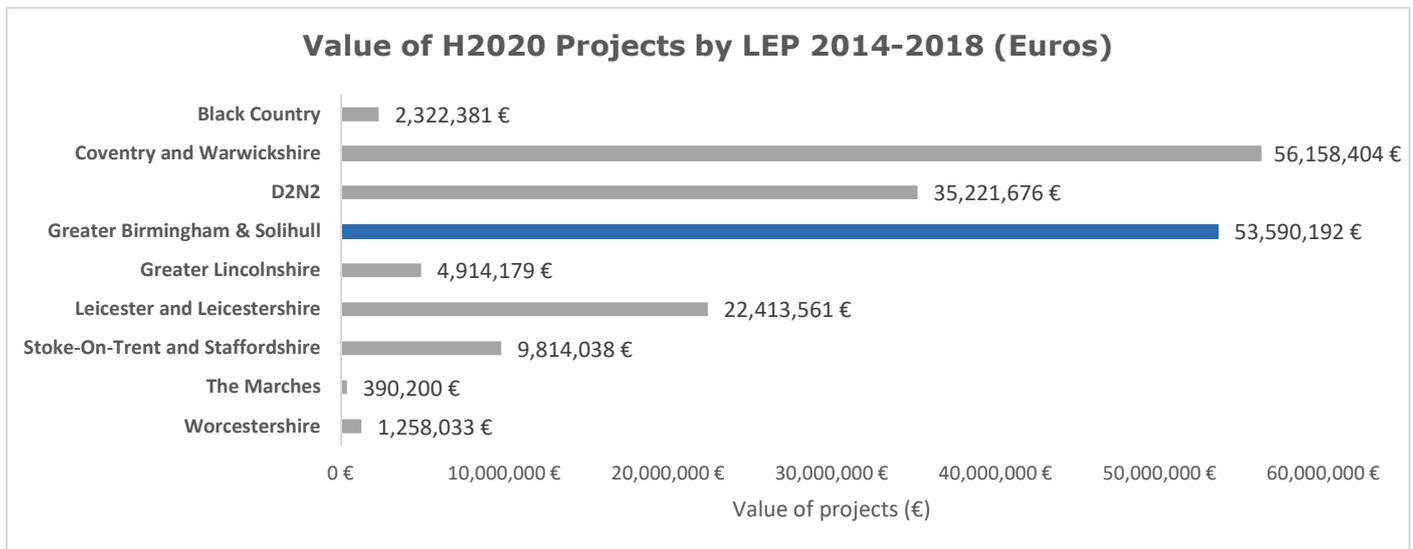


Figure 2 Source: EU Open Data Portal (2018)

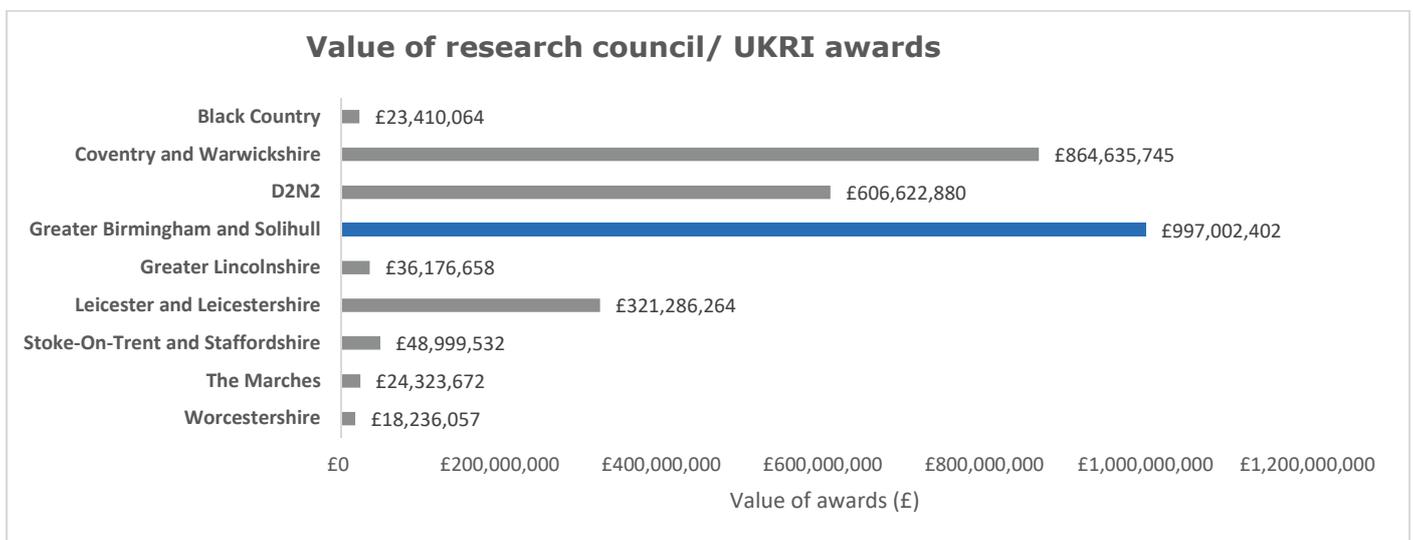


Figure 3 Source: UKRI (2019)

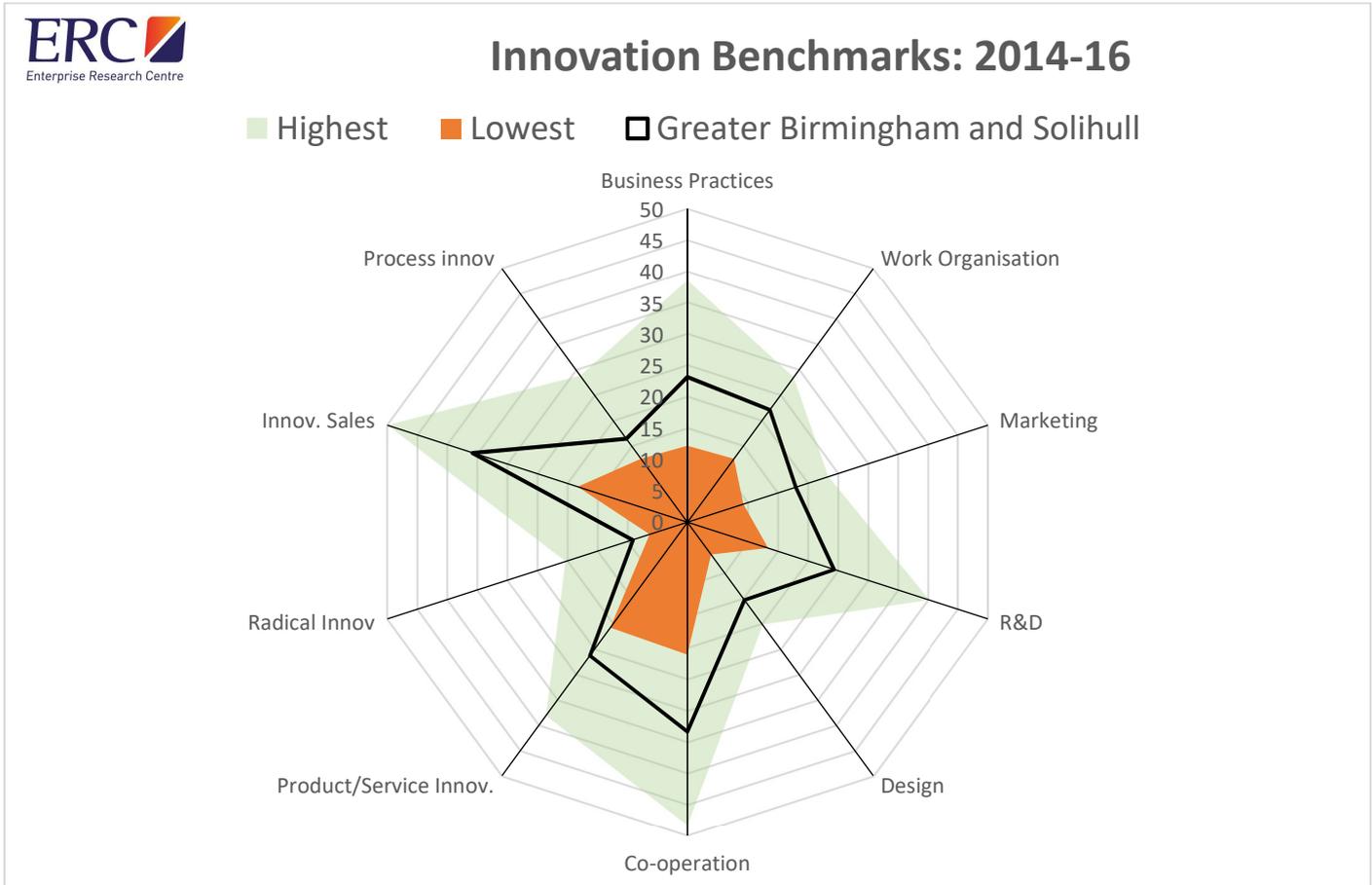


Figure 4 Source: Roper and Bonner (2019)

Charts are derived from the UK Innovation Survey. Details of derivation of data can be found in the [ERC Innovation Benchmarks Report](#).

Charts relate to a series of 10 metrics which provide an indication of the proportion of firms in each area engaged in each type of innovation

**Assets**

The Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP has internationally recognised strengths in research, particularly, in advanced material characterisation and use; energy; low carbon technologies; innovative healthcare; and digital technologies.

Five universities are located in the LEP area: Aston University; Birmingham City University; Newman University College, University College Birmingham; University of Birmingham. The largest universities – the University of Birmingham, Aston University and Birmingham City University play a crucial role in terms of researching and producing innovative products and educating the workforce of the future within the Midlands Engine.

As shown in Figures 2 and 3, universities and businesses in the LEP are among the most successful in the Midlands Engine at securing Horizon 2020, research council and UKRI grants. Between 2014 and 2018 53,590,192€ was secured from Horizon 2020, the European Union’s Research and Innovation programme. Research council and UKRI provided a further £997,002,402 to support research in the LEP between 2012 and 2021. These figures underline the crucial role that universities play in relation to local economic development.

There is a large number of business parks and related initiatives:

- Innovation Birmingham Campus,
- Birmingham Research Park,
- Longbridge Technology Park and Innovation Centre in Birmingham,
- Institute of Translational Medicine at University Hospital Birmingham,
- Birmingham's Smart City Commission,
- West Midlands 5G Testbed,
- Kingfisher Business Park in Redditch
- Fradley Park industrial estate in Lichfield.

STEAMhouse is a new centre in Digbeth, run by Birmingham City University. Aiming to encourage collaboration of the arts, science, technology, engineering and maths (STEAM) sectors, the centre offers workshops on product development, collaborative making and societal challenges; access to fabrication facilities to support creative SMEs and individuals with the development of new products; and hosts networking events.

Figure 4 indicates that Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area has particular strengths in terms of the proportion of firms undertaking marketing innovation (ranked 6<sup>th</sup> of 39 LEP areas and 3<sup>rd</sup> among Midlands Engine LEP areas<sup>1</sup>) and design investment for innovation (ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in England and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Midlands Engine).

## Barriers and potential challenges

Figures 1-3 indicate several challenges to increasing the translation of ideas into new products within Greater Birmingham & Solihull and by extension, the wider Midlands Engine.

Spending on R&D in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP is currently below the Midlands Engine average. £451 is spent per full-time equivalent post compared to the Midlands Engine average of £688/FTE and the £3107 spent per FTE in Coventry and Warwickshire.

There is considerable uncertainty around the future of UK participation in Horizon 2020 given the UK is shortly due to leave the European Union and the Horizon 2020 programme is financed by the European Commission.

The UK government has guaranteed funding for successful bids submitted before the UK leaves the EU. However, the shape and value of future funds is unclear. The UK government is yet to announce its new International Research and Innovation Strategy in conjunction with UK Research and Innovation.

Whilst Figure 4 indicates that the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area has strengths in market investment and design investment for innovation, it also reveals that the area performs more weakly in terms of the proportion of innovative firms' sales which are derived from innovative products or services (ranked 24<sup>th</sup> of 39 LEP areas and 7<sup>th</sup> among Midlands Engine LEP areas) and the percentage of firms introducing new or significantly improved processes during the 2014-2016 period.

## Opportunities

If businesses and universities within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull are to develop their strengths in translating research into new industrial and commercial practices further, it is important that stakeholders in the LEP prioritise investment in R&D and support businesses to boost productivity through investment in innovation, R&D, technology and machinery. Opportunities are available through the Invest to Grow campaign, recently launched by the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce to

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Midlands Engine 11 LEP geography.

share best practice, briefing information and business views on investment in innovation, R&D technology and machinery.

The arrival of HS2 into Birmingham in 2026, which will cut the journey time from London to 49 minutes, presents many opportunities to develop ecosystems in the region and increase the quality of jobs available.

The University of Birmingham has purchased 9.9 acres of land near the main University of Birmingham campus to construct a new Life Sciences Park. The aim of the development is to establish the Midlands as the sector's leading light in Life Sciences and healthcare research and development. This is a unique opportunity for the University to partner with local hospitals, the council and industry to develop new treatments, lead to the establishment of new SMEs, attract investment from large pharma and biotechnology firms and promote job creation. It will take advantage of the area's ethnically diverse, non-transient, regional population of over five million to deliver clinical trials, enhancing the region's status as an internationally recognised hub for clinical academia. In March 2019, the Med Tech Collaborative Network to enable and Enhance Cross-sector Transformation (CONNECT) West Midlands, was one of twenty-four projects awarded early-stage funding from the Strength in Places Fund. The project is a University of Birmingham regional-led consortium, which aims to link research development, cross-sector knowledge exchange and innovation in medical technologies to address a significant regional productivity gap within this sector and help existing / new businesses to co-create and accelerate development of innovative med-tech products and services to market by leveraging established expertise, partnerships and translational ecosystem.

### **Going Forward**

It is a key objective of the GBSLEP Strategic Economic Plan that Greater Birmingham become a "world leader in innovation and creativity, commercialising cutting-edge research and innovation" and to "stimulate demand-led innovation to increase business and workforce productivity and competitiveness. As part of the Local Industrial Strategy and complementing the proposed Innovation Framework and Programme for the West Midlands, GBSLEP delivery will focus on driving innovation in key sectors in the Greater Birmingham economy, helping to realise future market opportunities and ensure that the research excellence in our universities realises wider economic benefits in the Greater Birmingham and West Midlands economy.

In 2018/19 the LEP commissioned external consultants to co-design interventions that will increase levels of business innovation. Pilot activities will include developing and delivering pilot innovation programme with a focus on; challenge-based events with an emphasis on cross-sectoral activity; financial support for R&D and company centric innovation support.

Additionally, supporting development of key demonstrators, commercialisation of research and support for businesses based on the research excellence of the LEPs universities, including (but not limited to) key areas where we have acknowledged national expertise such as energy, quantum technologies and data-driven healthcare and life sciences supported through a translational ecosystem.

GBSLEP will also continue to support (primarily through capital funding) projects that stimulate and support market-led innovation amongst businesses in key growth industries by deploying strong market-led perspectives in appraisal of funding bids with an expansion of LEP capital pipeline for innovation.

**Case Study: Innovation Enabler**

Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP have worked with the Intellectual Property Office to provide a £100,000 'Innovation Enabler' fund to provide comprehensive intellectual property (IP) support for local innovators and creators.

Delivered through partners in universities, science parks and industry bodies the scheme has helped potential growth businesses access financial support and advice to get the most value from their innovations, brands, designs and creative works.

To date, 23 businesses have been identified and supported by an IP champion to receive a professionally-delivered IP audit report and a contribution towards 'IP confidence'. These early interventions help beneficiaries develop an IP strategy and maximise the value of their IP to grow their business. The pilot has been extended for another year into 2019/20.



MD-TEC (Medical Technologies Testing and Evaluation Centre), Institute of Translational Medicine, Birmingham

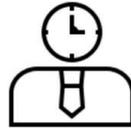
 **PEOPLE**



**24.3%**  
**RESIDENTS STAY  
FOR STUDY &  
EMPLOYMENT**



**£29,056**  
**AVERAGE  
EARNINGS**



**935,000  
JOBS**



**71.0%**  
**EMPLOYMENT**



**6.0%**  
**UNEMPLOYMENT**



**32.8%**  
**NVQ4 AND  
ABOVE (16-64)**

Within the UK’s Industrial Strategy, the People Foundation aims to generate good jobs and greater earning power for all. It focuses on improving skills levels, particularly in science, technology, engineering and maths; narrowing disparities between communities in skills and education and removing barriers faced by workers from underrepresented groups in the labour market.

Figures 5-9 illustrate the qualification level of residents of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP; the number of apprenticeship starts; the Gross Value Added rate; graduate retention rates and employment and unemployment rates in the area. They underline how the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP struggles in relation to key parts of the People Foundation of the Industrial Strategy due to relatively low rates of economic activity, employment and skills levels. Nonetheless, average earnings within the LEP are the second highest within the Midlands Engine and are an important factor in attracting higher skilled workers to the area. The area is also performing strongly compared to the Midlands Engine average in attracting students to remain in the area for study and employment, and in attracting graduates to work in the area after they have studied elsewhere.

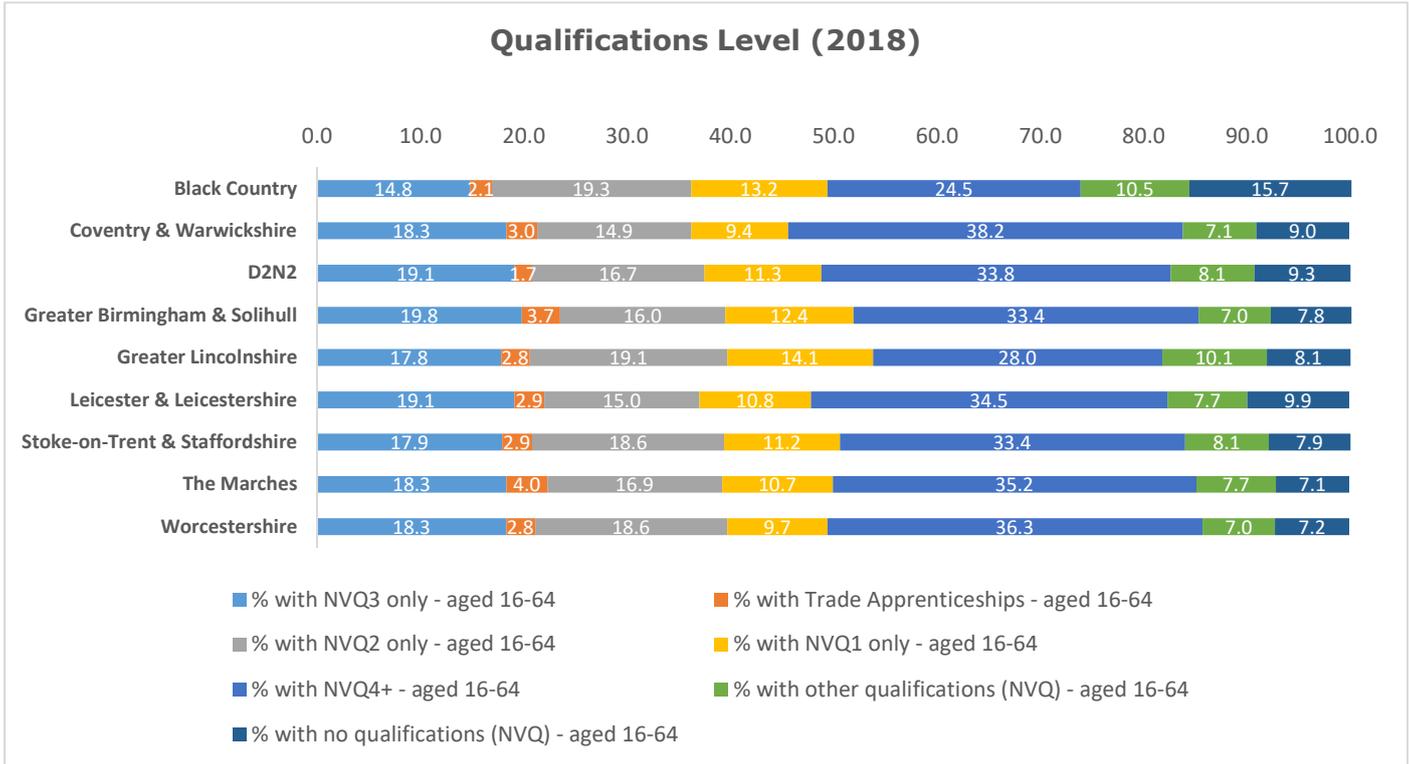


Figure 5 Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey (2019)

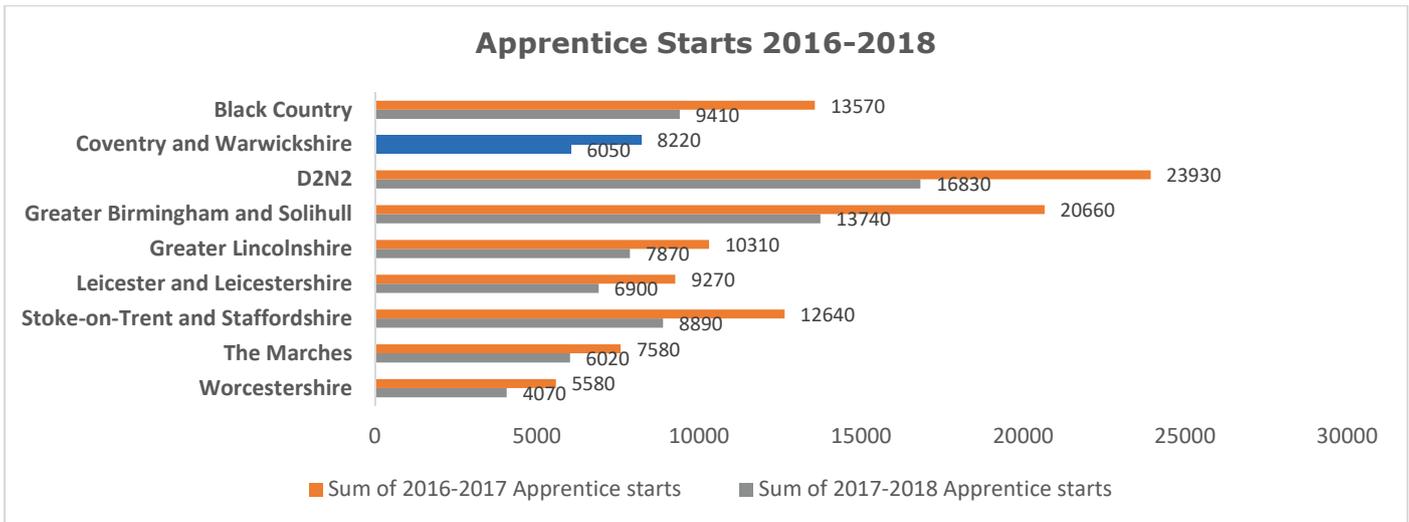


Figure 6 Source: Department for Education (2018)

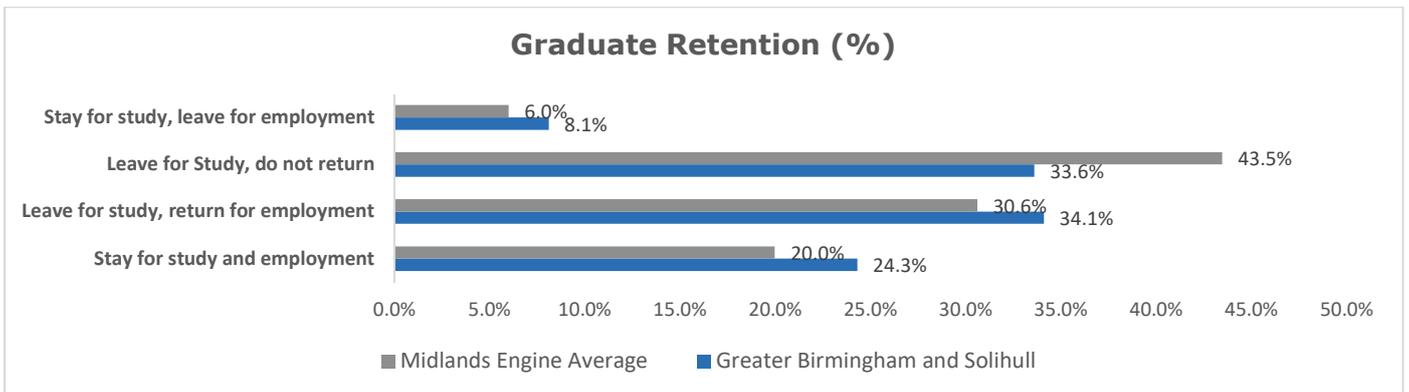


Figure 7 Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency, Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (2018)

**Employment and Unemployment Rates**

LEP	Employment Rate of Working Age Population (%)	Unemployment Rate of Working Age Population (%)
Black Country	68.7	6.1
Coventry and Warwickshire	77.0	3.3
D2N2	73.6	4.6
<b>Greater Birmingham and Solihull</b>	<b>71.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>
Greater Lincolnshire	74.5	5.3
Leicester and Leicestershire	73.4	5.0
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	76.4	4.0
The Marches	79.4	3.1
Worcestershire	79.4	3.3
<b>Midlands Engine (LEP)</b>	<b>73.9</b>	<b>4.8</b>

Figure 8 Source: Annual Population Survey (2018)

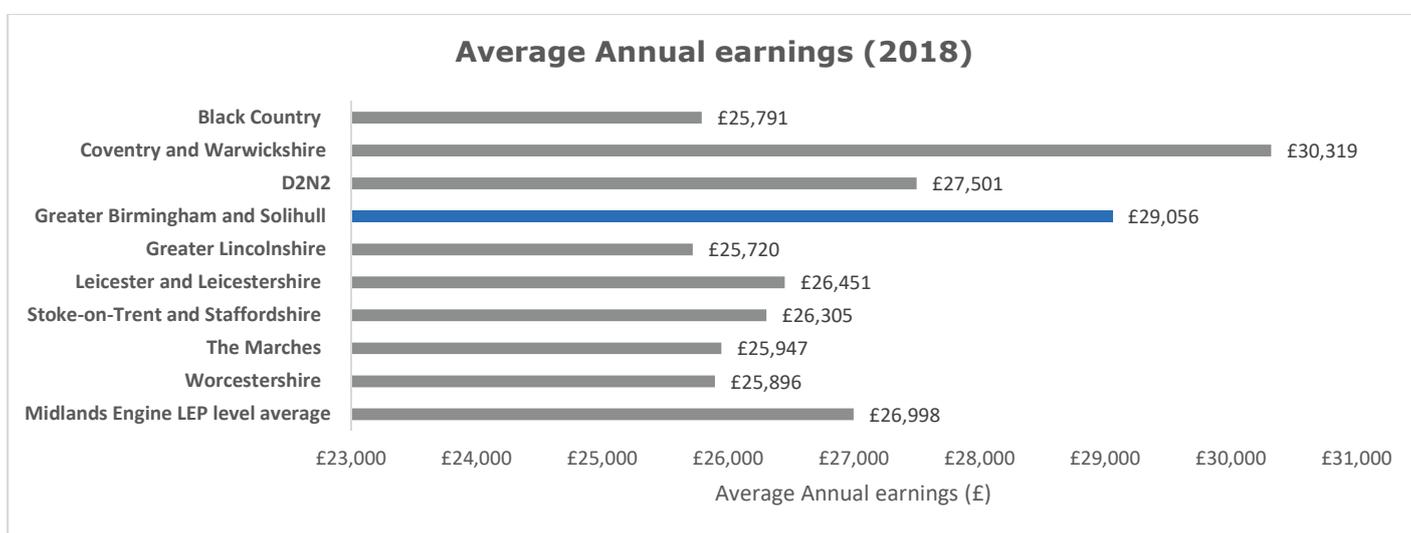


Figure 9 Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - Workplace Analysis (2018). N.B. data is provisional.

**Assets**

Despite the challenges evident in Figures 4-9, the makeup of Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP’s population has strengths compared to other LEPs in the Midlands Engine.

Employers in the LEP take on the second highest total number of apprentices and the third highest number in terms of apprentices per head compared to other Midlands Engine LEPs. This is important in terms of enabling companies to have the skills needed to be competitive and develop new products.

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP is also performing well in terms of graduate retention. The proportion of residents who leave for study and do not return is lower than the Midlands Engine average (33.6% compared to 43.5%). The LEP also does well in attracting residents to return after studying elsewhere with 34.1% of residents returning compared to the Midlands Engine average of 30.6%.

Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP’s population is extremely diverse offering an array of international connections, a blend of different cultures and a large proportion of under 25s.

Average earnings in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP are a further strength. According to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings workplace analysis, the average annual salary in the LEP in 2018

was £29,056. This is above the Midlands Engine LEP level average of £26,998 and the second highest average salary of all the LEPs in the Midlands (behind only Coventry and Warwickshire where average earnings were £30,319).

## **Barriers and Challenges**

Figures 5-9 emphasise how the labour market in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP faces important challenges in terms of the relatively low skills levels, and low rates of economic activity and employment among residents.

Skills levels in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP increased slightly from 2017 to 2018, though still lag behind the averages national averages and the average in certain areas of the Midlands Engine for some measures, albeit with decreasing gaps. The proportion of working age residents with no qualifications decreased from 8.6% to 7.8% between 2017 and 2018. This is below the Midlands Engine average of 9.2% but above the average for the Marches (7.1%) and Worcestershire (7.2). The proportion of residents with NVQ4+ qualifications in the area in 2018 was 33.4% above the Midlands Engine average of 32.8% but below the UK average of 39.2% and the average for Coventry and Warwickshire (38.25), Leicester and Leicestershire (34.5%), the Marches (35.2%), Worcestershire (36.3%). Access to intermediate and higher-level skills is essential to maximise innovation across the Midlands Engine.

The employment rate in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP in 2018 was the second lowest of all the Midlands Engine LEPs at 70.0%. The average employment rate in the Midlands Engine was 73.9%, ranging from 68.7% in the Black Country to 79.4% in The Marches and Worcestershire. Between 2016 and 2017, Birmingham and Solihull's employment rate increased by 1.5%, the second largest increase of all LEPs in the Midlands Engine.

Unemployment rates in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP also remain challenging although they have fallen sharply in recent years. In 2018, 6% of 16-64 year old in the LEP area were unemployed compared to the Midlands Engine average of 4.8% and the national average of 4.3%. The comparative figures for 2010 were 10.5% and 8.5% for Midlands Engine LEP area, and 7.8% for national, meaning unemployment has decreased fairly equally in the three areas in the intervening period.

As identified in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), low employment and high unemployment is concentrated in certain neighbourhoods of Birmingham and North Solihull.

Nonetheless, it is important the LEP prioritise ensuring that high quality jobs are available for graduates in the city. The proportion of residents who stay in the LEP for study but then leave for employment at 8.1% is the second highest in the Midlands Engine after the Black Country (9.2%). Improving graduate retention is important in improving the skills base of the resident population.

## **Opportunities**

Developing skills levels and ensuring that residents within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP have the skills needed for the future is central to ideas and knowledge flowing more efficiently in the LEP and Midlands Engine, and ensuring that universities and business have the required skills to develop innovations and be competitive.

Increasing skills levels and reducing unemployment was the number one priority in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP's SEP 2016-2030. They identify how large-scale investments such as HS2 are likely to lead to the creation of an additional 68,000 lower skilled jobs and 100,000 medium and high skilled jobs between 2015 and 2030. The HS2 Skills Strategy offers opportunities for Greater Birmingham to benefit from the construction of Advanced Transport and Infrastructure National College. Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP have focused their skills framework around three key themes -

Ignite, Accelerate and Retune, identifying opportunities to raise aspirations, match skills supply to sector demand, enable unemployed people to gain new skills and promote inclusive growth.

The devolution agreement secured by the West Midlands Combined Authority to manage the Adult Education budget and co-design the Department for Work and Pensions Work and Health Programme offer opportunities to tailor skills and employment support to the needs of residents in the LEP. The Connecting Communities employment support programme funded through the Department for Work and Pensions and managed by the West Midlands Combined Authority includes several sites in Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP such as Redditch, Shard End and Chelmsley Wood. It offers the opportunity to develop insight into the potential of place-based employment support models to build social capital and support residents into employment. The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Skills Plan is designed to directly align with and complement the emerging Regional Sector Employer Task Forces, the Local Industrial Strategy, as well as delivery of the Regional Skills Plan at West Midlands level.

The Learning Hub, a purpose built training centre funded at University Hospitals Birmingham (UHB), funded partly by the European Regional Development Fund, offers a model for employer-led training of unemployed residents that could be replicated elsewhere. The Hub aims to assist unemployed people within the local community back into work, by providing pre-employment training, advice and guidance.

The hosting of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022 is an opportunity to expand the number of jobs available in the city. According to the [Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce](#) and Birmingham City Council, the Games are expected to create 4,526 jobs per year until 2022 with 950 posts created thereafter. Job opportunities are likely to be available in the construction sector in particular. In addition to the Alexander Stadium in Perry Barr undergoing a £70 million refurbishment, a new athletes' village will be constructed nearby.

## Going Forward

GBSLEP's long-term people ambition is to accelerate an increase in our skilled workforce ensuring it meets the increasing local employer demands for higher skilled labour. Skills shortages and gaps that continue to increase as the local economy grows can act as a brake on the productivity and future growth of our economy.

The LEP acknowledges the need to appropriately upskill over 63,000 more people at NVQ Level 3 (A Level) and above to meet national levels: to reach this level they will require an approximate 10% increase in the current working age population qualified to NVQ Level 3+.

The LEP's plan for skills aims to i) use partnership and collaboration to tackle skills shortages and gaps that are barriers to long-term business growth and productivity ii) motivate and inspire people to develop skills for key sectors for growth and technologies iii) develop employer led programmes to increase workforce diversity, to combat skills shortages and drive economic growth and iv) prime the adoption of disruptive and emergent technologies to enable skills development that matches today and tomorrow's skills needs.

Key areas of focus will be to facilitate new employer led approaches to ensure training provision that better meets and keeps pace with industry demands; motivating and inspiring people to develop skills for key sectors for growth by highlighting opportunities; developing employer led programmes to increase workforce diversity and encouraging employer supported experimentation and early adoption in the use of new technologies for training in future skills needs.



Virtual Reality and Robotics Development Centre, Solihull College



# INFRASTRUCTURE



**495,840**  
HOUSES



**1**  
INTERNATIONAL  
AIRPORT



**7.22**  
HOUSE PRICE  
TO INCOME  
RATIO



**30.2%**  
SUPERFAST  
BROADBAND

The Industrial Strategy recognises that having modern and accessible infrastructure throughout the UK is essential to future growth and prosperity. It stresses the importance of large scale, long-term investment in transport, housing and digital networks for long-term productivity, through increasing the earning power of Britain’s people, communities and businesses.

The strategy aims to improve access to full-fibre broadband, develop new 5G networks, improve the usage of 5G technologies, create a new high-speed rail network better connecting residents to jobs, regenerate stations and airports, upgrade the road network and improve individual’s lives through better quality housing and the promotion of clean, affordable energy.

A range of key transport infrastructure serve the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area. The arrival of high-speed rail will improve connectivity across the functional economic area. The location of one of the Hubs for the West Midlands 5G test bed in Birmingham also offers opportunities to develop and test new digital technologies. Nonetheless, continued investment in new housing and new employment sites together with major new infrastructure schemes and expansion of broadband coverage is important to meet the areas’ growth aspirations.

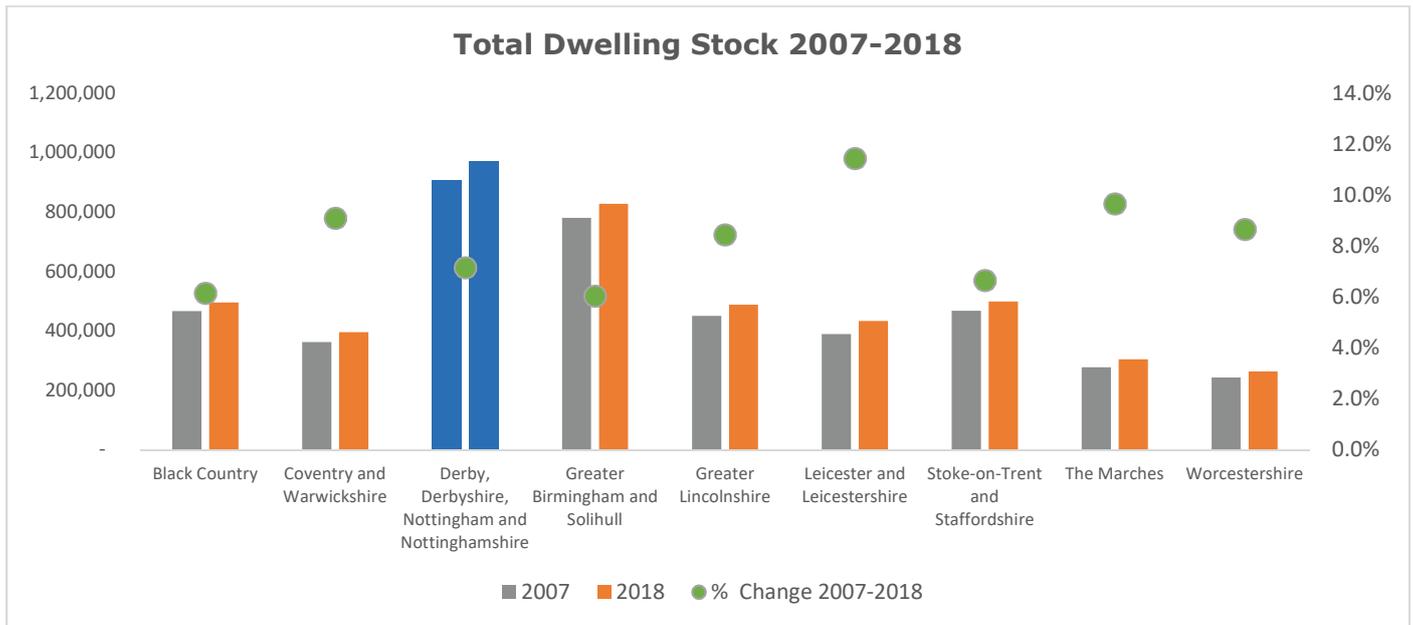


Figure 10 Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018)

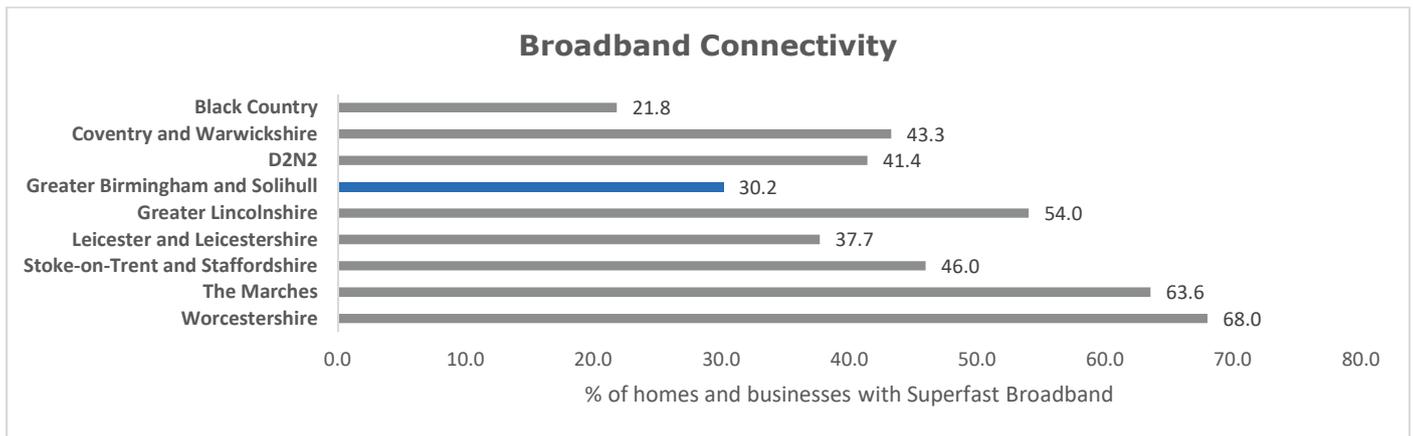


Figure 11 Source: OFCOM, Connected Nations (2018)

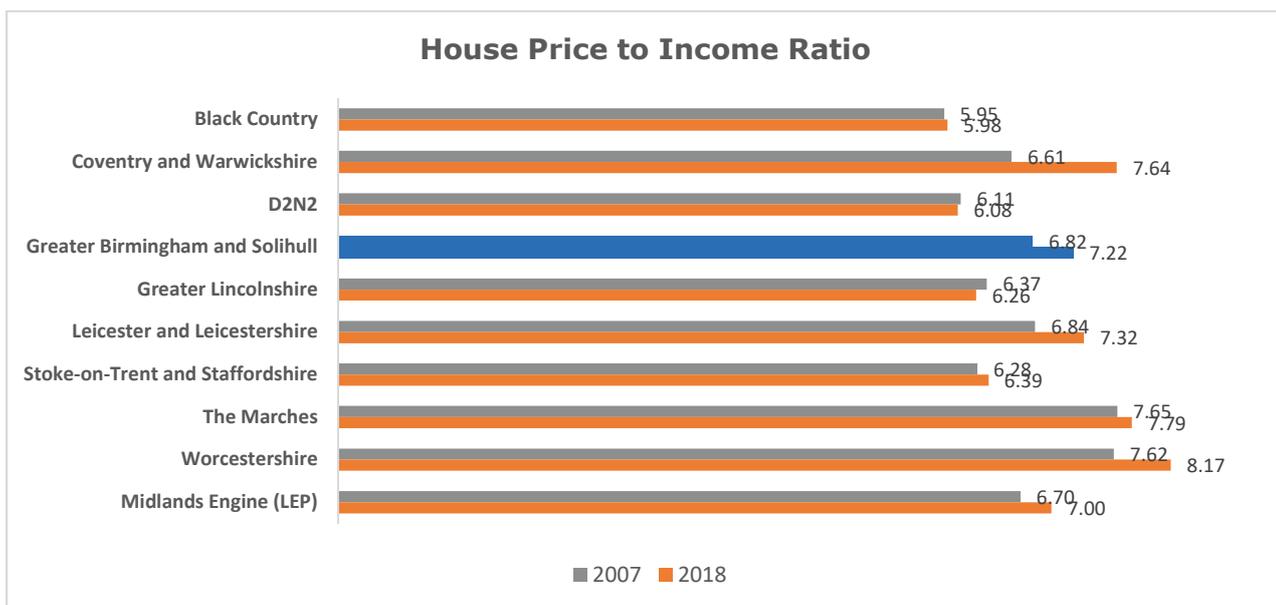


Figure 12 Source: ONS, House price to residence-based earnings ratio (2019)

## Assets

Greater Birmingham and Solihull is a key transport Hub within the Midlands Engine. A range of transport infrastructure serves the LEP area including:

- Birmingham International Airport, which acts as a gateway to range of national and international destinations and is an important economic driver to the region. It is the seventh largest airport in the UK (serving 12 million passengers in 2018) and the largest in the region (UK Civil Aviation Authority, 2019).
- 4 major stations providing direct services to London, the South West, the West Midlands, the North West, Yorkshire, Scotland and Wales as well as cross-city stations.
- The M6, which provides access to the North West.
- The M5, which provides access to the South West.
- The M42, which provides access to the East Midlands.
- The M40, which provides access to the South East.
- The Midlands Metro, which connects Birmingham to Wednesbury, Wolverhampton and West Bromwich.

The area has seen the construction of a raft of residential and commercial developments over recent years. Figure 10 shows how total dwelling stock increased by 6% between 2007 and 2018, to 827,650 dwellings.

Houses within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area are on average more affordable than in some parts of the Midlands Engine. The House Price to Income Ratio in 2018 was 7.22 compared to a ratio of 7.79 in the Marches, 7.64 in Coventry and Warwickshire, and 8.17 in Worcestershire.

## Barriers and Challenges

Several issues exist in terms of the capacity of the infrastructure network in Greater Birmingham and Solihull to support the LEP's growth aspirations.

Broadband connectivity within the LEP is low compared to the rate of coverage in other Midlands Engine LEP areas. In 2018, superfast Broadband was only available in 30.2% of Birmingham compared to the Midlands Engine LEP average of 41.9%, 63.6% in The Marches and 68% in the Worcestershire LEP areas.

As in many other UK cities, the supply of high-quality grade A office space is now starting to run out in Birmingham. It is essential that stakeholders bring forward plans for new office developments to ensure office supply keeps pace with business demand.

Legislation relating to the construction of phase 2b of HS2 (running from Crewe to Manchester and Birmingham to Leeds) is delayed by over a year and will now not be tabled until 2020. Agreeing Phase 2 is crucial for improving transport infrastructures within the region and for creating regional development that is more balanced.

## Opportunities

Considerable opportunities to develop and test new 5G technologies, particularly in relation to public services are provided by Birmingham hosting one of the Hubs for the West Midlands 5G Testbed funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and local authorities. Research suggests that the use of 5G in these technologies will provide considerable opportunities for new applications, business models and enhanced lifestyles, also consequently increasing productivity. [IHS Economics](#) (2017) have

examined how 5G technology is likely to contribute to the global economy, estimating that 5G will enable USD\$12.3 trillion of global economic output in 2035. The Hub in Birmingham will trial using 5G technology to carry out hospital outpatient appointments and emergency appointments remotely by video link.

The LEP have identified a new tranche of strategic employment sites. For example, the Snow Hill Masterplan in Birmingham City Centre sets out plans to create 200,000 square metres of new office space as well as 4,000 new residential units and 10,000 jobs.

The recent announcement of a £500 million expansion plan for Birmingham Airport could lead to a significant increase in passenger numbers – a 40% increase over the next 15 years according to the airport. More and short haul flights would increase the connectivity of the region and contribute to increased visitor spending and potentially increased prosperity in the region.

**Going Forward**

GBSLEP has agreed three Growth Deals with government, creating a £433m Local Growth Fund programme - a pipeline of capital investments that will create jobs, improve transport links, upskill residents, create houses and raise the quality of life across the region.

Operating since 2015, the LGF programme is now entering its final two years of delivery. As of April 2019, over £110m had been spent on project delivery. The programme is seeing the number of projects reaching a successful completion grow. Over the next 12 months, some 15 projects across the programme are expected to complete delivery.

These projects include construction of the Battery Way extension in Tyseley, which will provide a new 700m road to provide access to the 8ha Mucklow Park employment site, that will deliver up to 340,000sqm of high-quality manufacturing and distribution space.

The £81m Redditch Gateway project, co-funded between GBSLEP and Worcestershire LEP will provide access to the 25.5ha commercial development site located on the eastern side of Redditch. This is a key employment site for the Greater Birmingham & Solihull area with up to 90,000sqm of commercial floorspace creating around 2,060 jobs and £90m of additional GVA.



Redditch Gateway



# BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT



**85,990  
BUSINESSES**



**14,345  
BUSINESS BIRTHS**



**-10.7%  
BUSINESS BIRTHS**



**10.7% OF JOBS  
IN BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION  
& SUPPORT  
SERVICES**



**8.5% OF JOBS  
IN PROFESSIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC &  
TECHNICAL  
SECTOR**

The Business Environment Foundation of the Industrial Strategy aims to support the UK to be the best place to start and grow a business. The key challenge identified in the strategy is how to ensure all businesses adopt best practice from the UK's most productive businesses. It aims to address how, on average, managers in the UK are less proficient than managers are in other competitor countries. Overall, the strategy aims to drive productivity in all businesses regardless of size through increasing collaboration, improving skills levels and improving access to good and well-paid employment. Key policies include:

- The launch and rollout of partnerships between government and industry to increase sector productivity through Sector Deals in the life sciences, construction, artificial intelligence and automotive sectors.
- Over £20 billion in investment in innovative and high potential businesses including the establishment of the £2.5 billion Investment Fund.
- The commissioning of a review into what actions may be most effective in raising productivity among SMEs.

Greater Birmingham and Solihull is an important centre of business in the Midlands Engine. It has the largest business stock of all Midlands Engine LEP areas. However, the number of businesses established in the area has fallen in recent years.

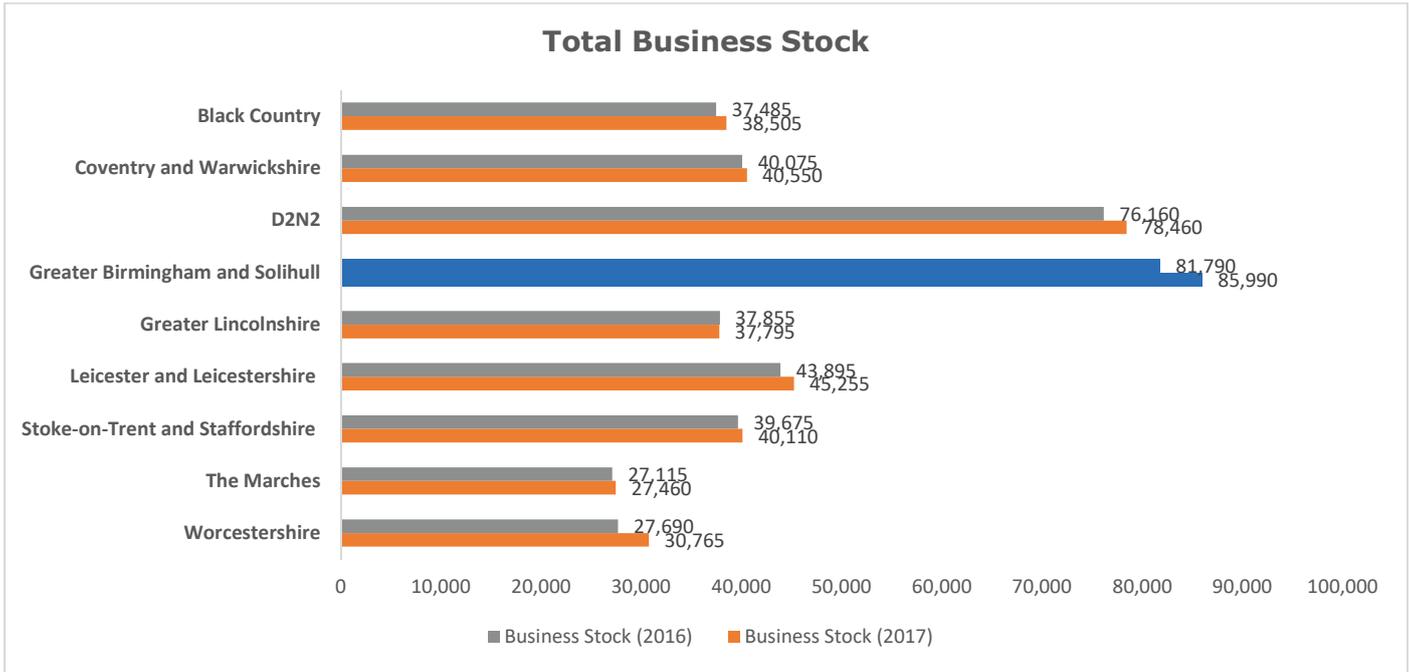


Figure 13 Source: ONS Business Demography (2018)

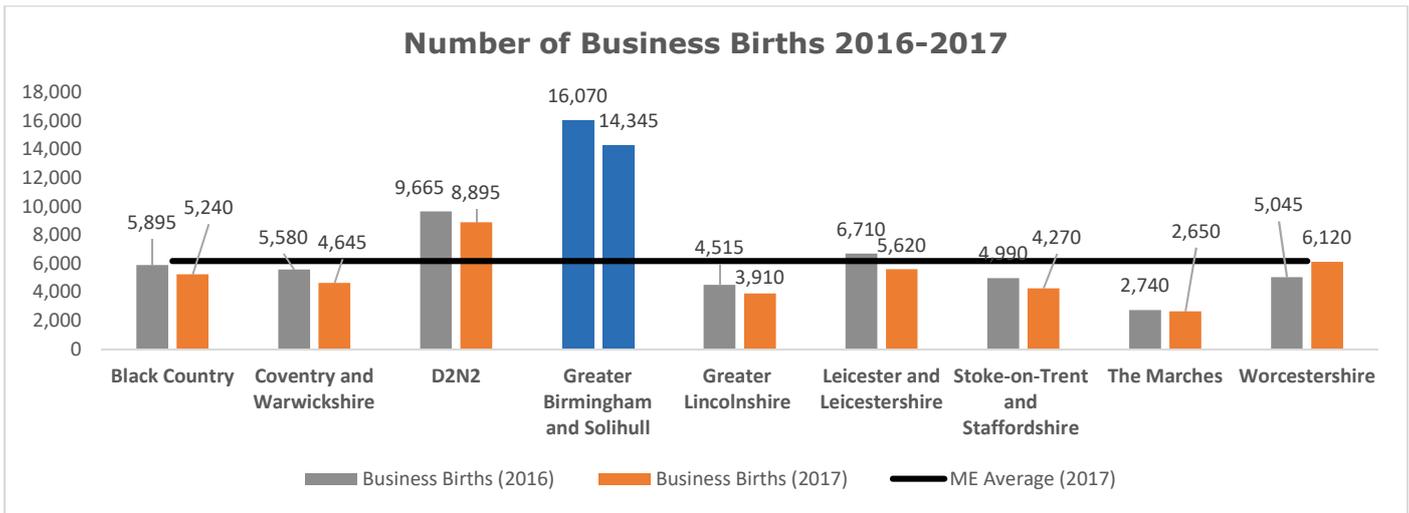


Figure 14 Source: ONS Business Demography (2018)

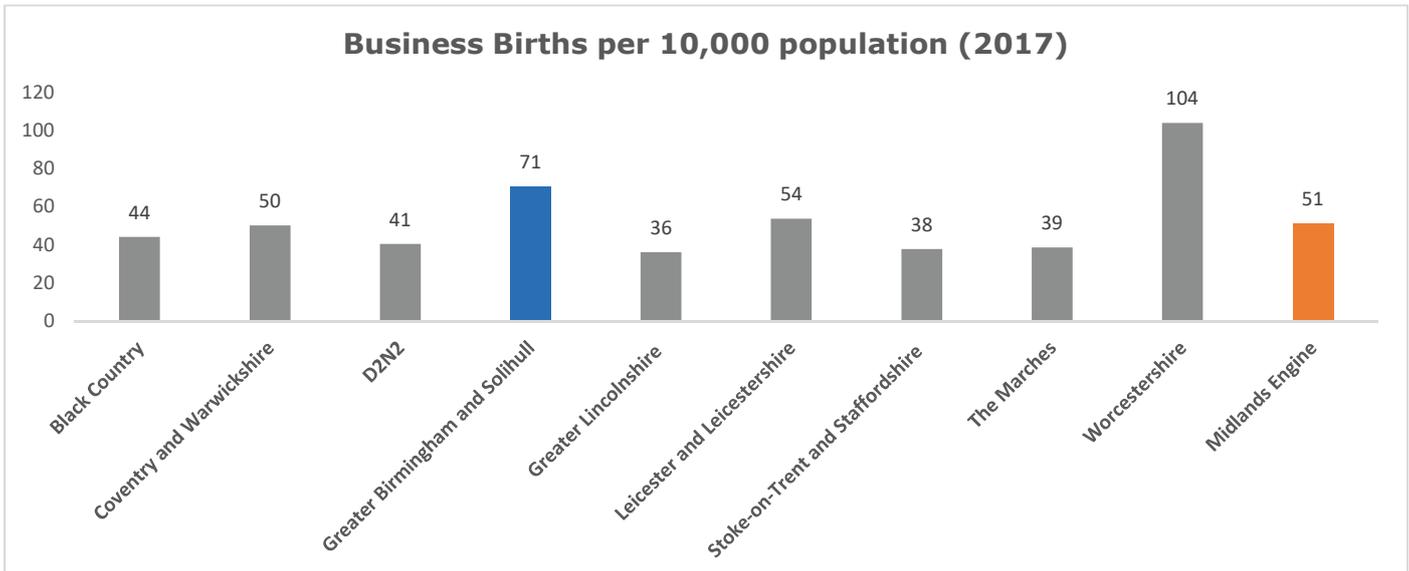


Figure 15 Source: ONS Business Demography (2018)

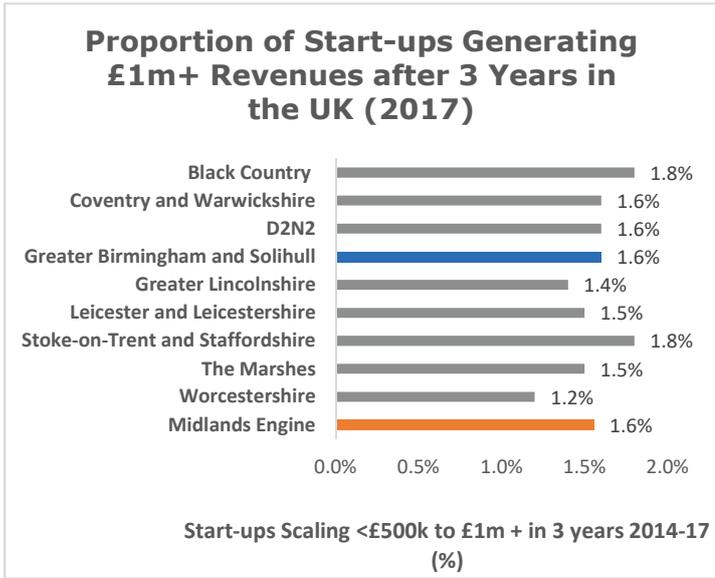


Figure 16 Source: Enterprise Research Centre UK Local Growth Dashboard (2018)

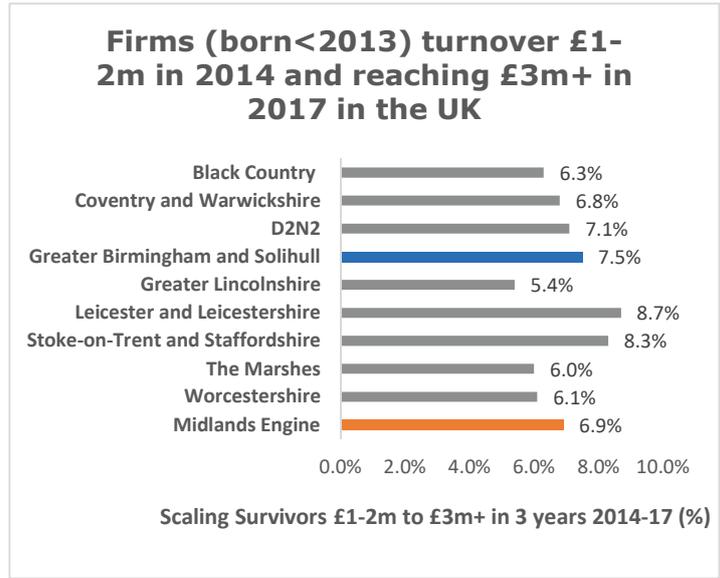


Figure 17 Source: Enterprise Research Centre UK Local Growth Dashboard (2018)

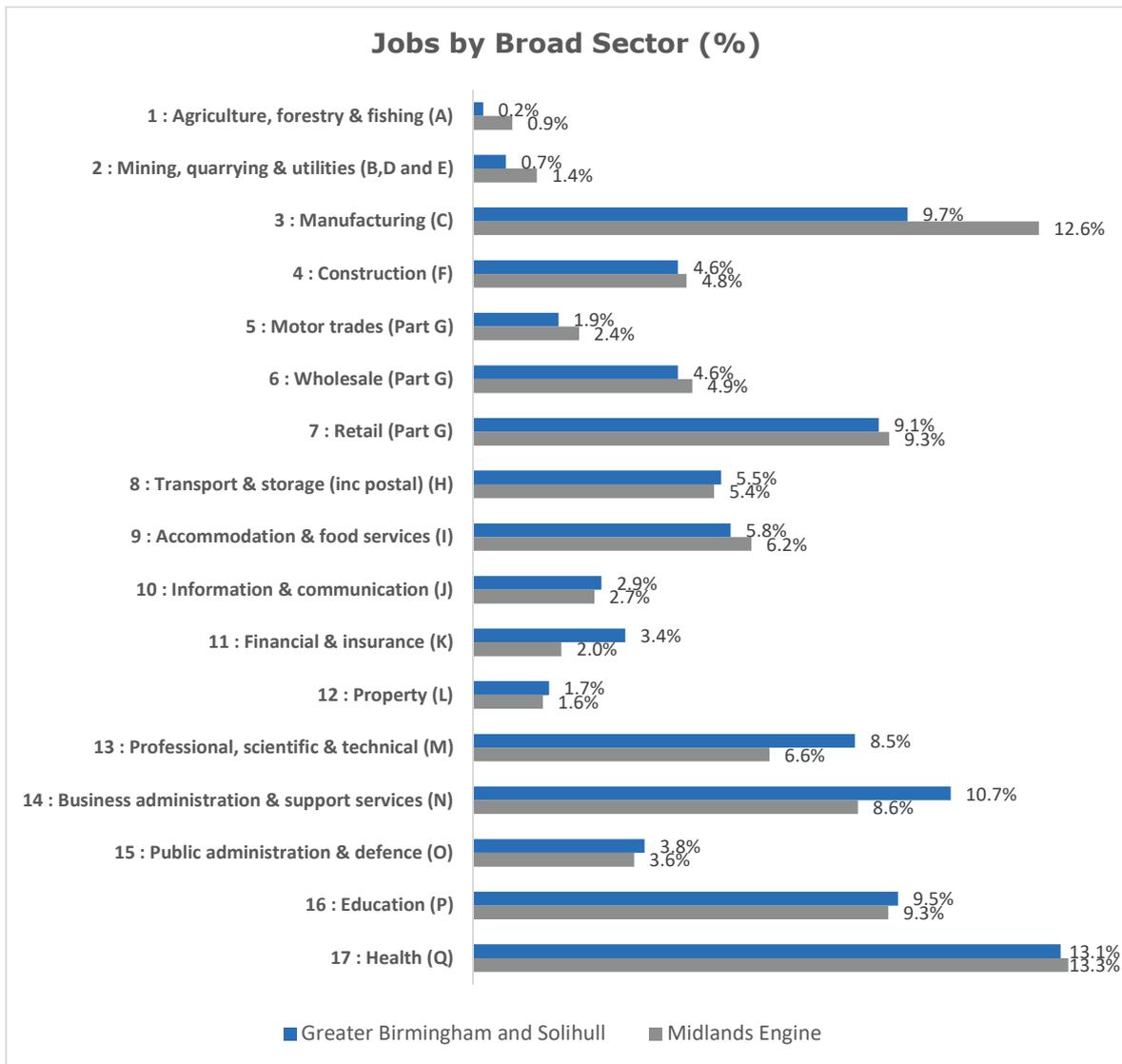


Figure 18 Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (2018)

## Assets

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area is the location of a number of nationally and internationally significant companies (including Mondelez, HSBC, National Express and Jaguar, Wesleyan Assurance Society and Gowling WLG), reflecting the manufacturing heritage of the area as well as the role it plays as a hub for the professional and business services sector for the wider region.

At 85,990 in 2017, the LEP area has the largest business stock of all the Midlands Engine LEPs. The nearest competitor LEP area was D2N2 with 78,460 businesses.

The largest sectors in the area in 2018 in terms of the number of jobs were health (13.1%), business administration and support services (10.7%) Manufacturing (9.7%), Education (9.5%) and Retail (9.1%). The percentage of jobs in Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area is above the Midlands Engine average in the Professional, scientific and technical, and the Business, administration and support services sectors in particular. In 2017, 127,000 people were employed in the health sector; 92,000 in business administration & support services; 91,000 in manufacturing; 85,000 in education; 82,000 people were employed in the retail sector and 80,000 in the professional, scientific and technical sector.

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area also plays an important role in the Midlands Engine in terms of Gross Value Added. GVA per head in 2017 was £25,240. This is above the Midlands Engine average of £22,139 and the second highest rate of all Midlands Engine LEP areas (Coventry and Warwickshire was the only LEP with a higher rate at £28,159). The LEP has the highest number of business births of all Midlands Engine LEPs (14,345 compared to 8,895 business births in D2N2 – the LEP with the second highest number). However, it should be caveated that much of the increase in business births in Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull is likely to be related to a management company in Bromsgrove registering large numbers of businesses at a single address, this error will be corrected in the next data from ONS. Given that Worcestershire LEP area has the smallest population in the Midlands Engine, the impact of this company on the overall number of business births per 10,000 of the population is likely to be high.

The property sector grew particularly strongly in Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP.

The Enterprise Research Centre has developed a dashboard presenting a set of growth metrics for start-ups and existing firms at LEP level. As shown in Figure 18, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP is performing above the Midlands Engine average in terms of the proportion of firms that existed prior to 2013, had a turnover of £1-2m in 2014 and reached a turnover of £3m+ in 2017. 7.5% of firms achieved this milestone compared to 6.9% of firms in the Midlands Engine.

## Barriers and Challenges

Although the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area had the highest business birth rate in the Midlands Engine in 2016 and 2017, it had a lower rate of business births per 10,000 of the population (71) compared to the Worcestershire LEP (104) in 2017. The number of business births in Greater Birmingham and Solihull also fell by 10.7% between 2016 and 2017 indicating economic uncertainty in the LEP. The [ONS](#) noted a sharp fall in the rate of business births nationally in 2017, citing potential uncertainty related to the UK's future relationship with the EU as a possible cause.

City-REDI research into the Economic Impacts of Brexit on the UK, its Regions, its Cities and its Sectors has shown how many important manufacturing and primary industries are highly exposed to Brexit. For example, 36% of the professional, scientific and the technical services sector is at risk in the event of a no deal Brexit due to its reliance on cross UK-EU border supply chains. This is the largest sector in Greater Birmingham and Solihull indicating considerable effort may be required to restructure supply chains and employees in the LEP area to mitigate against the potential of losses caused because of reduced post-Brexit trade and movement with the EU.

In terms of scaling firms, the proportion of firms in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area with a turnover of £1-2 million per annum in 2014 that grew by 2017 to have at least a £3m turnover (7.5%) was above the Midlands Engine average (6.9%) and in line with the average for England (7.5%). Nonetheless, two LEPs in the Midlands Engine had higher rates than Greater Birmingham and Solihull (Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire with a rate of 8.3% and Leicester and Leicestershire with a rate of 8.7%).

### **Opportunities**

A £5 million Research England grant awarded in 2018 to the Midlands Innovation Universities (led by the University of Birmingham) to establish a connected system of incubators and accelerators will support enterprise development in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area as well as the wider Midlands region. The Midlands Innovation Commercialisation Accelerator (MICRA) is the largest formal technology transfer network in the UK. It will help entrepreneurs to drive their ideas forward through providing support and access to enterprise development, investment and investor relationships, offering the potential to increase business survival rates.

Black Country LEP, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP have worked collaboratively with the West Midlands Combined Authority to develop a Local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands. This Strategy reflects the complexities of a region that generates 5% of the UK's output as the fastest growing part of the UK economy (27% growth over the past five years). As part of the Local Industrial Strategy four key major new market opportunities, and twelve key sectors with clearly identified competitive advantages within each and underpinning foundations of our economy have been identified. The scale and diversity of a fast-growing economy in the West Midlands, which consists of three interlinked but distinctive economic areas (as represented by the three LEPs), comes from the area's collective strength.

Opportunities for future growth in Greater Birmingham and Solihull will be delivered through Local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands.

GBSLEP's delivery priorities for 19/20 focus on those areas of priority and in preparing activity for wider implementation of the Local Industrial Strategy.

**Major new market opportunities**

**Future of mobility**

**Data driven health and life sciences**

**Creative content, techniques and technologies**

**Modern services**

**A distinctive economy** - Creative and innovative, with global supply chain strengths a diverse and young population, well connected, trading and entrepreneurial. Unique opportunities ahead in the Commonwealth Games and City of Culture.

**Sector strengths**

**Low carbon technology**

Energy and clean growth

**Aerospace**

Precision component manufacturing

**Logistics / transport technology**

Future mobility

**Metals & materials**

Innovative supply chains

**Life sciences**

Devices  
Diagnostics, real life testing

**Professional skills**

Skills and a full services sector

**Rail**

Digital rail  
High Speed 2

**Construction**

Offsite modern manufacturing  
Land remediation

**Creative**

Games, Next Gen content, process and product design and designer maker

**Food & drink**

Machinery, food & fluid control tech, Photonics R&D

**Automotive**

Battery development  
Drive train  
CAV

**Tourism**

Shakespeare's England  
Commonwealth Games  
Business  
City of Culture

**Actions** to unblock barriers to productivity and growth, integrated in places and communities to drive inclusion

**Foundations of productivity - drivers and enablers of growth**

**People, skills & employment**

**Infrastructure & environment**

**Ideas / Innovation**

**Business environment**

**Place**

West Midlands Combined Authority (2019)

### **Case Study: Birmingham City Centre Enterprise Zone**

Established in 2011 the City Centre Enterprise Zone (EZ) now covers 113ha across 39 sites representing the most significant growth opportunities in the city. The EZ is focussed on early intervention in infrastructure to accelerate growth and unlocking development to deliver the vision of the Big City Plan (BCP) and the GBSLEP priorities for growing the economy and creating jobs. By utilising the uplift in business rates generated by development and investing it in priority schemes the EZ is a unique tool to drive economic success.

The EZ has already achieved some success, enabling the accelerated transformation of the City Centre. Since its establishment in 2011 the EZ has attracted £598m of private investment, accelerated 208,000sqm of floorspace, delivered 4,264 jobs and secured a range of occupiers such as HSBC, HS2 Ltd and HMRC.

The Enterprise Zone Investment Plan (EZIP), launched in 2019, consolidates the two existing investment plans: City Centre EZIP (2014) and the Curzon Investment Plan (2016). The programme will unlock the major growth opportunities by removing barriers to development, creating a supportive environment for investment, job creation and growing the city and regional economy. It will be supported by a set of financial principles by which investment decisions to allocate EZ resources are made and robust governance arrangements to oversee the programme.

Focussing on the period of 2019-2028, it sets out a phased programme of investment for major schemes and infrastructure. This Investment Plan will continue to accelerate development across the EZ including maximising the benefits of HS2 arriving in 2026 and a contribution to delivering the expansion of the Midland Metro Tram Network from the City Centre through East Birmingham to North Solihull and UK Central.

### **Going Forward**

GBSLEP recognises that effective support for businesses across the Greater Birmingham and Solihull area is crucial to solving the productivity challenges that the local economy faces. Evidence demonstrates that entrepreneurs and business owners who receive external help and support are more likely to have better performing, more successful businesses. Although Birmingham (data not available at GBSLEP level) has a low level of self-employment against the national average, there is an increasing appetite for business start-up, with Birmingham having the highest start-up rate outside of London for the past six years running. Business survival rates are, however, not as strong and the city-region is still behind the national average, indicating the importance of continuing to drive effective support for our businesses to grow and survive longer.

GBSLEP's focus will be on continuing to provide a core level of support to all businesses through their Growth Hub, and the services it signposts through Growth Hub delivery partners, while growing activity to ensure that there is substantial added value in the specific services that the LEP provides for businesses through scale-up programmes; pilots with national organisations such as the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) and Be the Business; inclusive growth programmes aimed at business owners and managers in diverse communities across the city-region; and ensuring that local businesses are able to access the finance they need to grow and thrive. In addition, and under the auspices of the Local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands, GBSLEP will work with Black Country and Coventry and Warwickshire LEPs to explore where collective business support offerings can add value across the West Midlands.



Arena Central, Birmingham City Centre

 **PLACE**



**93.3%  
URBAN  
POPULATION**



**4/38  
LEP AREAS IMD  
AVERAGE RANK**



**3.3 MILLION  
VISITOR TRIPS**



**7.5 MILLION  
VISITOR  
NIGHTS**

The Place Foundation within the Industrial Strategy aims to create prosperous communities across the UK, as competitive cities, towns and rural areas are crucial to shaping the UK’s economic future. It acknowledges that whilst the UK has world-leading businesses across the UK, greater disparities in regional productivity exist than in other European countries, shaping people’s pay, work opportunities and life chances.

Key policies introduced to support delivery of the Place Foundation include:

- The requirement for Local Enterprise Partnerships and Mayoral Combined Authorities to agree Local Industrial Strategies, which build on local strengths to deliver on economic opportunities.
- Establishing the Transforming Cities fund providing £1.7 billion to support intra-city transport projects driving productivity by improving connections within city-regions.
- The piloting of a £42 million Teacher Development Premium to test the benefits of a £1000 budget supporting the professional development of teachers working in areas that are struggling.

The Foundation connects to the other Foundations in terms of improved skills, better-connected infrastructure, strengthened cultural assets and identification of suitable land for housing growth across the country. Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area benefits from a strong visitor economy in terms of the number of visitor trips and visitor spending. The numbers of nights visitors spent in the LEP is comparatively low. Opportunities to improve connectivity and prosperity exist related to the arrival of HS2 and the Commonwealth Games in particular but uncertainty surrounds the future of the proposed HS2 Phase 2 route linking Birmingham to the North West.

RURAL POPULATION

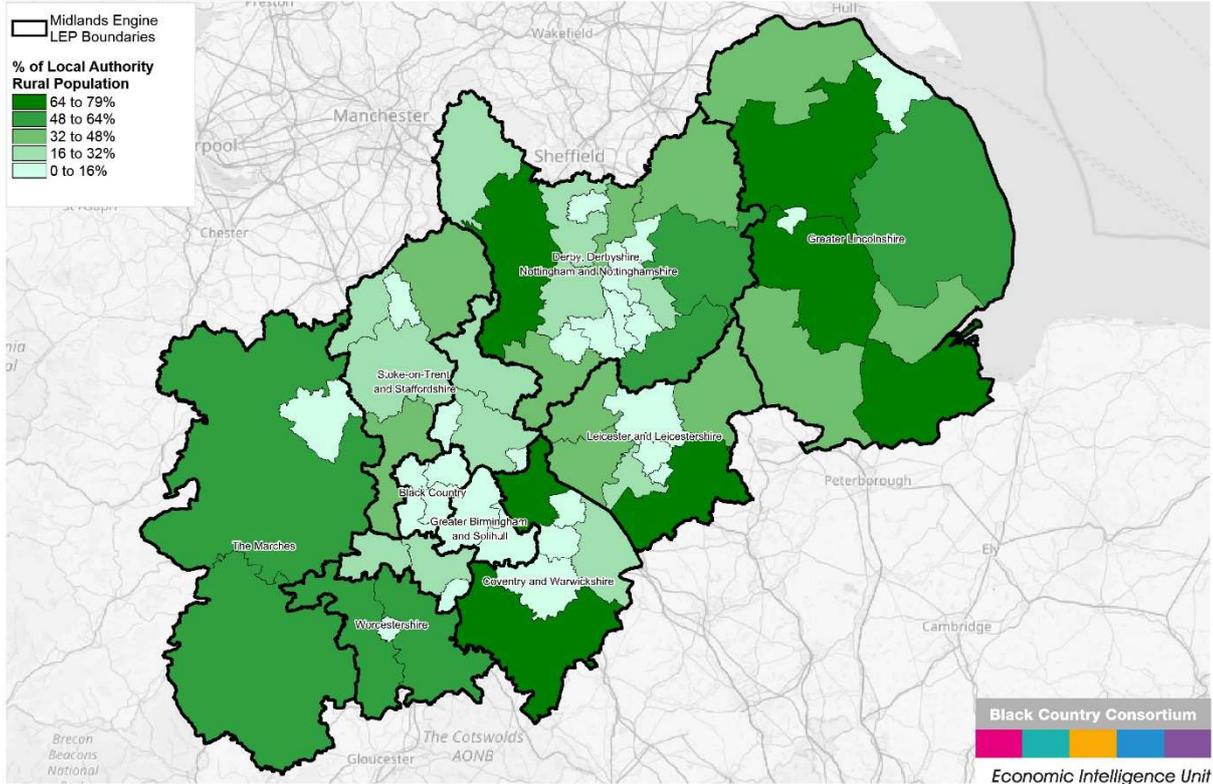


Figure 19  
Source:  
Huggins et al (2019)

INDICES OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION

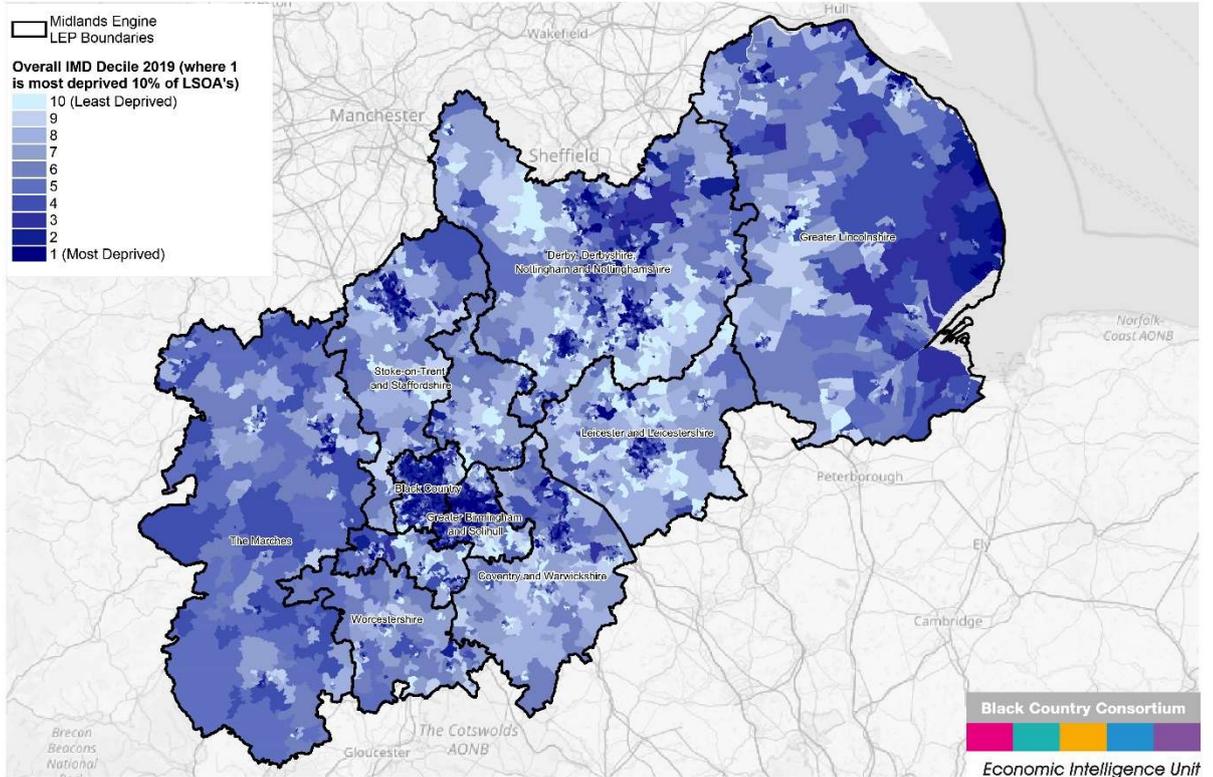


Figure 20  
Source:  
Gov.uk (2019)

**UK COMPETITIVENESS INDEX**

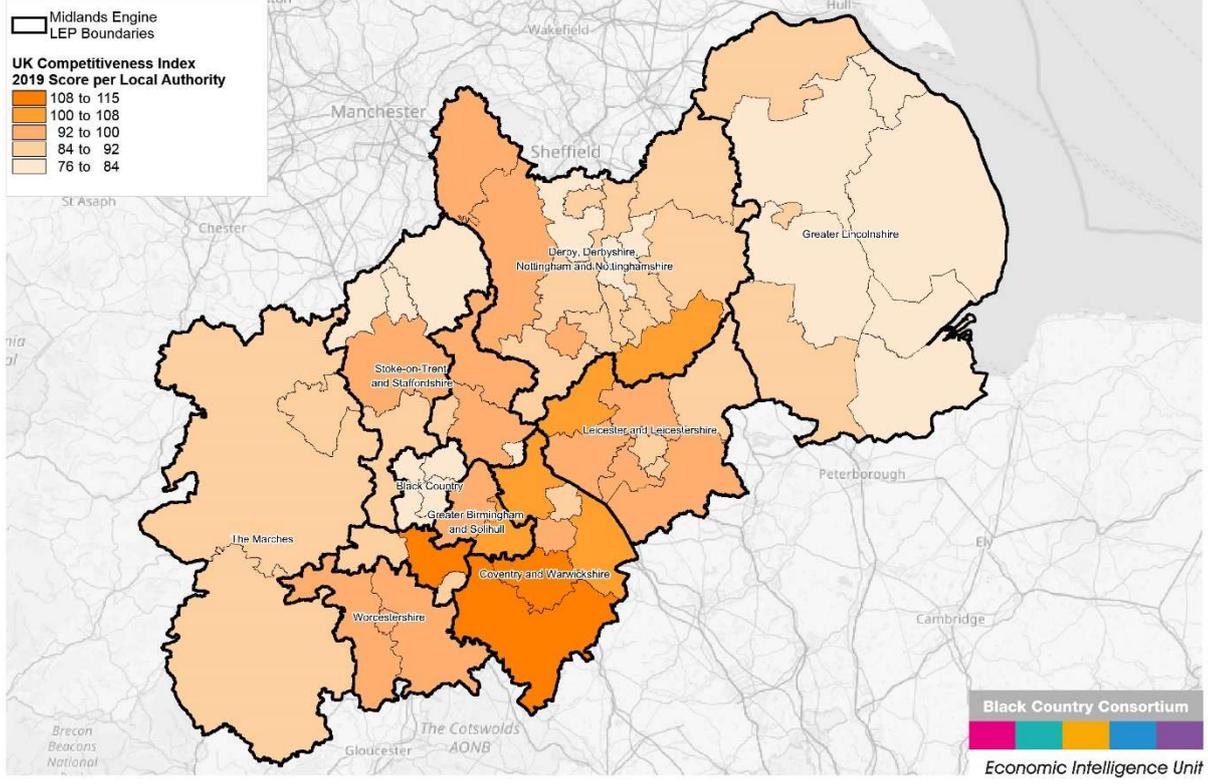


Figure 21  
Consumer Data Research Centre (2017)

The UKCI benchmarks the competitiveness of the UK's localities based on an integrated measure of competitiveness focusing on both the development and sustainability of businesses and the economic welfare of individuals.

**INDEX OF ACCESS TO HEALTH ASSETS AND HAZARDS - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

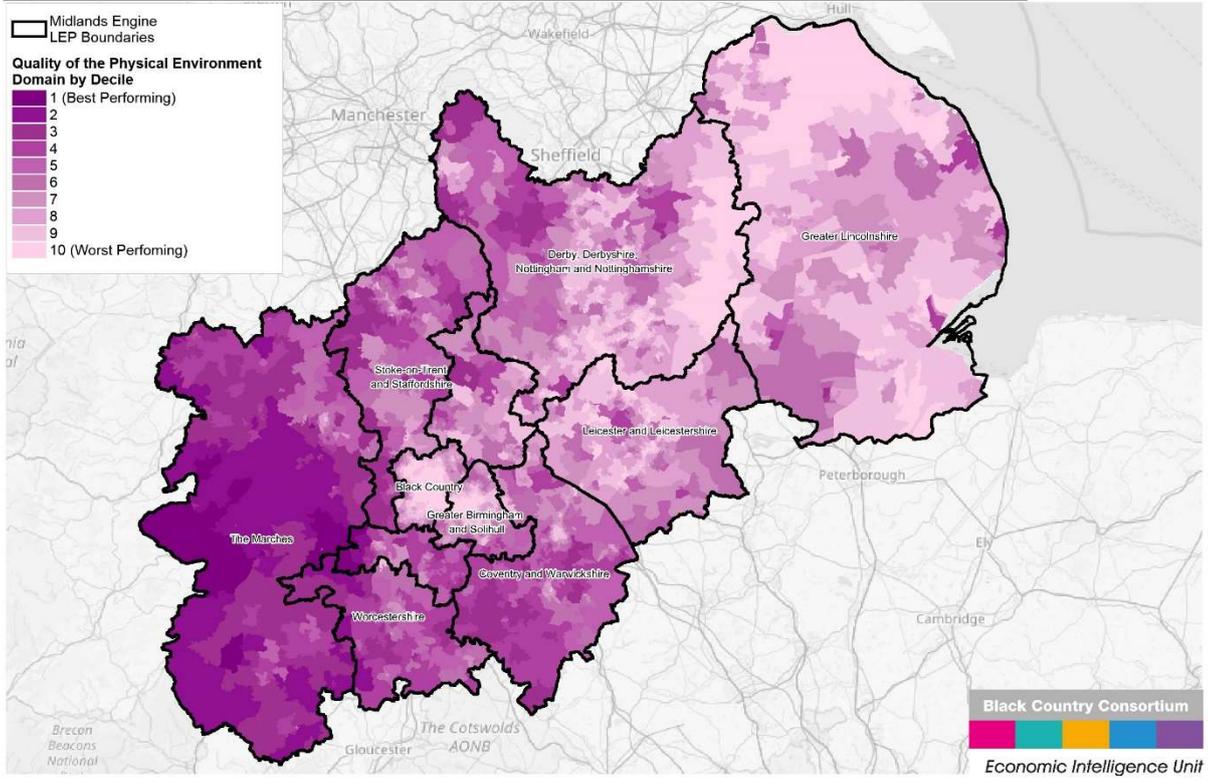


Figure 22  
Source: Gov.uk (2015)

The Index of 'Access to Health Assets and Hazards' measures how 'healthy' neighbourhoods are. The domain of physical environment relates to the presence of green space and three air pollutants.

**INDEX OF ACCESS TO HEALTH ASSETS AND HAZARDS - HEALTH SERVICES**

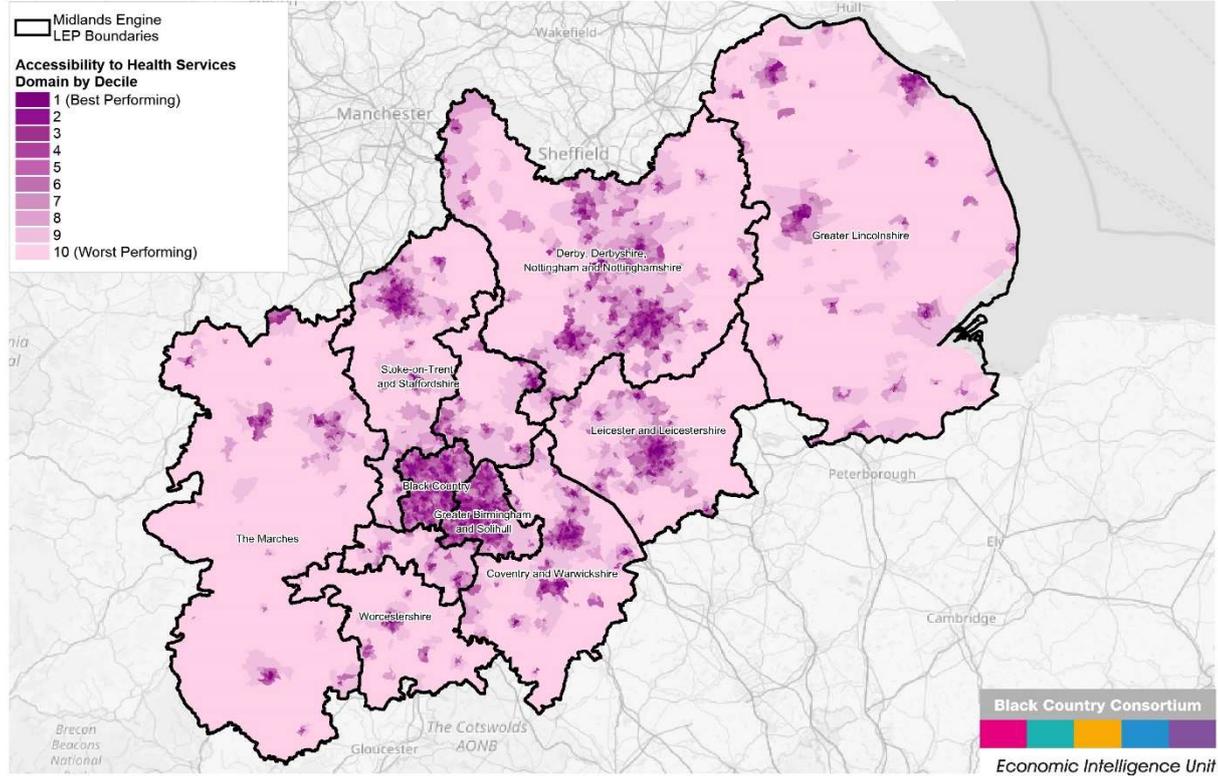


Figure 23  
Source: Gov.uk (2015)

The domain of Health services relates to access to GPs, hospitals, pharmacies, dentists and leisure services

**INDEX OF ACCESS TO HEALTH ASSETS AND HAZARDS - RETAIL ENVIRONMENT**

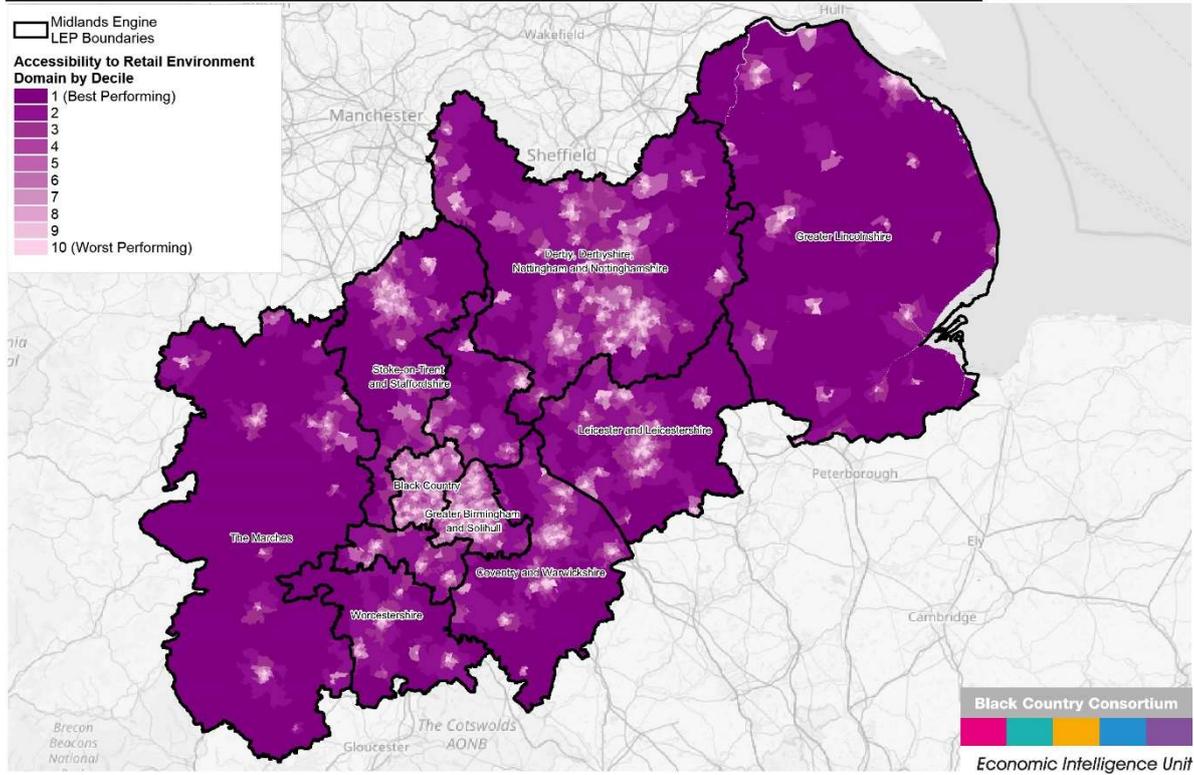


Figure 24  
Source: Gov.uk (2015)

The domain of accessibility for Retail Environment relates to specifically access to fast food outlets, pubs, off-licences, tobacconists and gambling outlets A healthy area perspective better / more access would equate to worse score

INDEX OF ACCESS TO HEALTH ASSETS AND HAZARDS

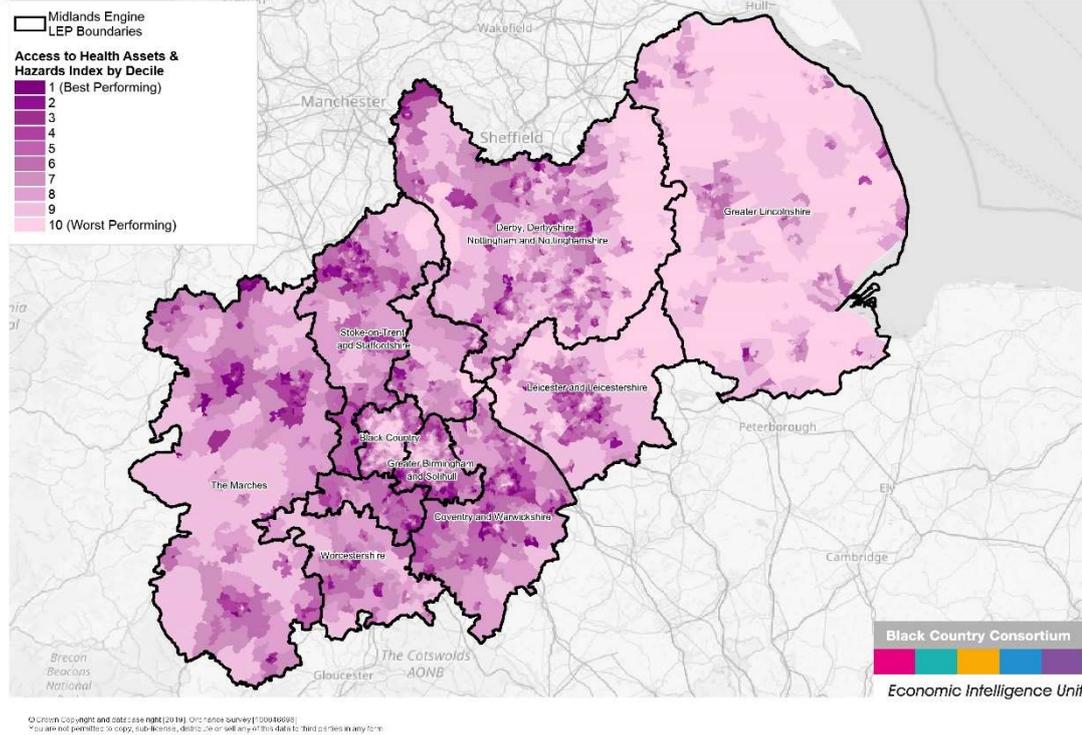


Figure 25  
Source: Gov.uk (2015)

This graph shows the overall multi-dimensional index score for each area in the Access to Health Assets and Hazards Index, combining the indicators under the three different domains of accessibility shown above: retail environment, health services and physical environment.

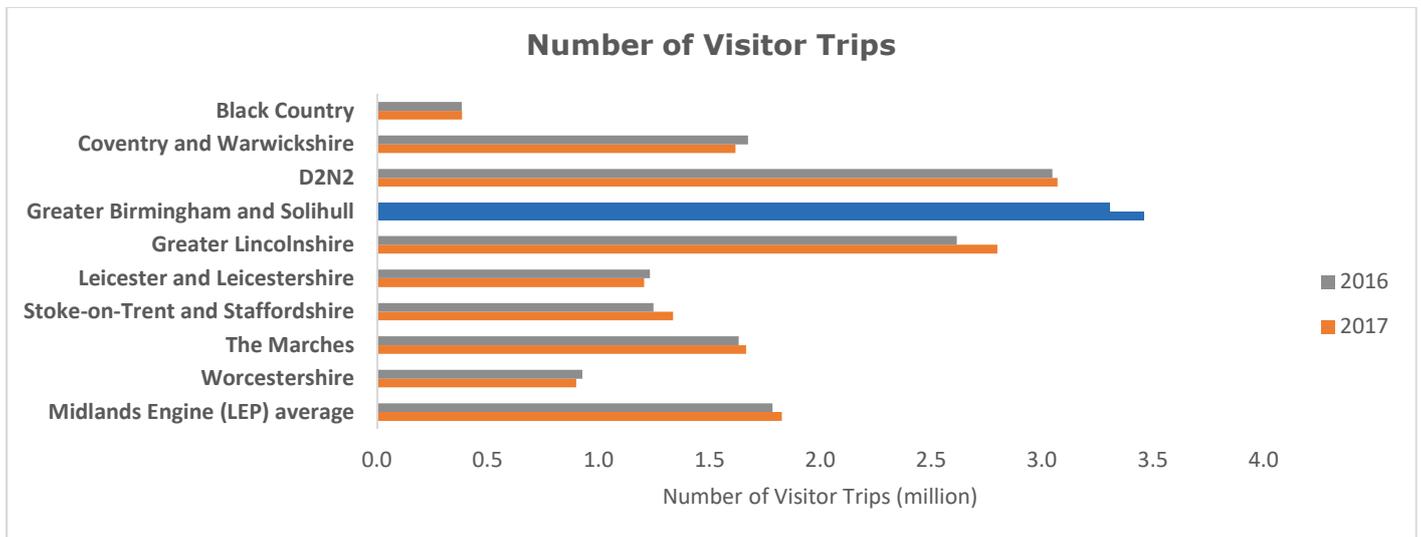


Figure 26 Source: Visit Britain: Great Britain Tourism Survey (2018)

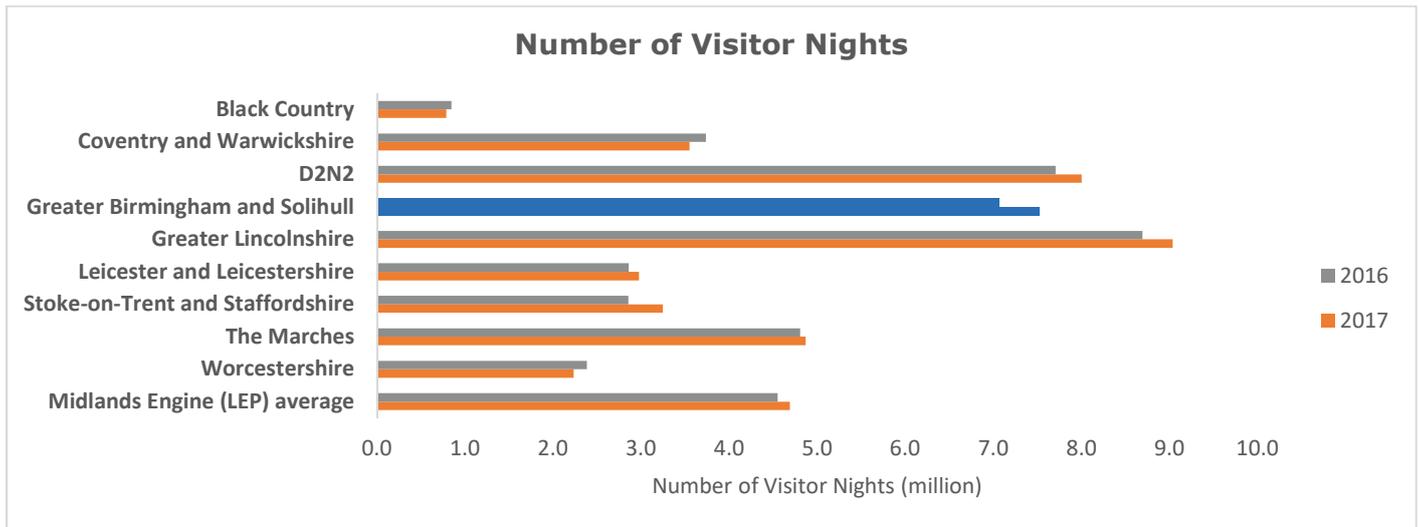


Figure 27 Source: Visit Britain: Great Britain Tourism Survey (2018)

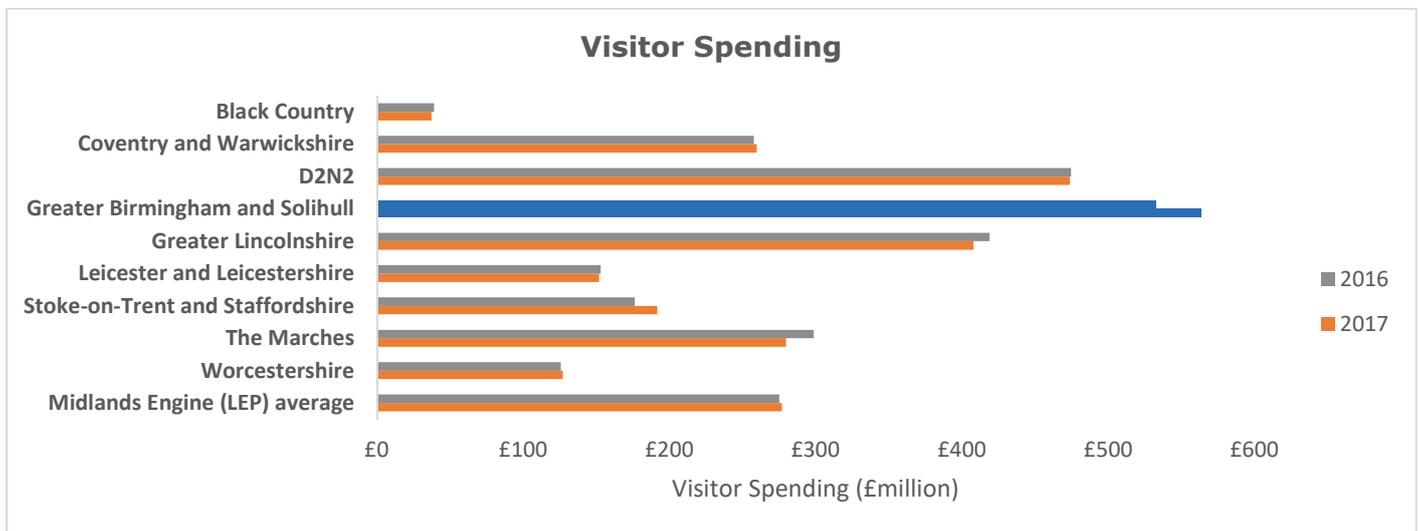


Figure 28 Source: Visit Britain: Great Britain Tourism Survey (2018)

**Number of dwellings started and completed 2018-2019**

	Dwellings started				Dwellings completed			
	Private Enterprise	Housing Associations	Local Authority	All	Private Enterprise	Housing Associations	Local Authority	All
Black Country	1,600	180	260	2,040	1,770	170	250	2,190
Coventry and Warwickshire	2,710	1,010	0	3,720	3,250	910	0	4,160
D2N2	4,920	620	30	5,570	5,040	710	70	5,810
<b>Greater Birmingham and Solihull</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>4,880</b>	<b>3,410</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4,340</b>
Greater Lincolnshire	3,070	340	10	3,420	2,740	510	40	3,290
Leicester and Leicestershire	2,540	560	0	3,140	2,770	700	0	3,440
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	2,850	440	10	3,300	3,060	650	10	3,710
The Marches	2,470	330	40	2,840	2,190	610	100	2,900
Worcestershire	1,850	630	0	2,470	1,680	640	0	2,320

Figure 29 Source: Gov.uk (2019)

**Assets**

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area contributes strongly to the Midlands Engine through continued growth in its visitor economy. As shown in Figures 19 and 21, it is the Midlands Engine LEP area with the highest number of visitor trips and value of visitor spending. The number of trips made increased by 6% in 2017 compared to 2016 to 3.5 million. Visitor spending also increased by 5% in 2017 compared to the previous year to reach £563 million. The UK Competiveness Index which benchmarks the competitiveness of the UK’s cities and Local Enterprise Partnerships based on a measure integrating both the development and sustainability of businesses and the economic welfare of individuals, shows that the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area is competitive in the Midlands Engine. It is the Midlands Engine LEP area with the third highest UKCI score in 2019 (95.0) after Coventry and Warwickshire (100.0) and Worcestershire (97.2). For comparison, London had the highest LEP score (128.5) and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly the lowest (81.3). It should be noted Greater Birmingham and Solihull was one of the three most improved LEP areas with the most improved UKCI score 2010-2019 demonstrating the pace of growth and dynamism in the area.

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area is also performing strongly in relation to the Places Foundation focus on housing growth. In 2018-2019, construction started on 4,880 dwellings in the LEP. This is the second highest figure of all the Midlands Engine LEPs (behind only D2N2 where construction began on 5,570 dwellings).

Whilst the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP is the second most urban LEP in the Midlands Engine (93.3% urban), it contains numerous environmental assets including:

- The Lickey Hills Country Park (524 acres of park and woodland located just 10 miles south west of Birmingham);
- Sutton Park, a 2,400-acre National Nature Reserve located 6 miles north of Birmingham city centre. One of the largest urban parks in Europe, it is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- Woodgate Valley Country Park, a 450-acre area of countryside in the centre of Bartley Green and Quinton, Birmingham.
- 23 nature reserves in Solihull, covering over 200 hectares.
- Arrow Valley Country Park in Redditch covering 900 acres.
- 1,500 acres of parks, play areas, woodlands, sports and amenity areas in Lichfield.

The AHAA (the index of 'Access to Health Assets and Hazards') is a new multi-dimensional index developed by the CDRC for Great Britain measuring how 'healthy' neighbourhoods are. It ranks Lower Super Output Areas based on: accessibility to retail outlets (fast food outlets, pubs, off-licences, tobacconists, gambling outlets), accessibility to health services (GPs, hospitals, pharmacies, dentists, leisure services), and the quality of the physical environment (green space, air pollution). It shows that the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area is (together with the Black Country) among the best performing Midlands Engine LEP areas for access to health services. This is important in terms of creating an attractive place for people to live and work.

### **Barriers and Challenges**

As the UKCI Index demonstrates, competitiveness is uneven within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area, emphasising the need for the LEP to continue to support sustainable businesses across the geography and maintain progress in addressing unemployment and improving skills levels. Competitiveness is strongest within Bromsgrove (113.9) and Solihull (107.2) and lowest in Cannock Chase (85.8) and the Wyre Forest (85.3). Birmingham has a score of 92.5, likely reflecting the higher unemployment rate in Birmingham compared to Bromsgrove and Solihull. The 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation also indicate how parts of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area struggle with high levels of deprivation. It had the second highest IMD average rank of the Midlands Engine LEP (21,859) compared to 23,657 in the Black Country, 16,784 in Coventry and Warwickshire, 18,509 in D2N2, 16,210 in Leicester and Leicestershire, 17,198 in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, 17,901 in the Marches and 15,631 in Worcestershire.

Whilst the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area has the highest number of visitor trips and visitor spending, Greater Lincolnshire and D2N2 outperform it in terms of the number of nights visitors spent in the LEP area in 2016 and 2017. Visitors spent 0.5 million more nights in D2N2 and 1.5 million more nights in Greater Lincolnshire than in Greater Birmingham and Solihull. The central location of Birmingham and its strong transport connections may mean that visitors are less likely to consider overnight accommodation necessary than in areas with poorer transport connections. How to attract a greater number of in-bound tourists who have a tendency to stay longer and spend more is an important challenge for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP.

Despite the parks and woodland areas listed above, the AHAA index scores the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area poorly in terms of quality of the physical environment. It is also among the worst performing Midlands Engine LEPS for accessibility to urban outlets (e.g. fast food outlets, pubs, off-licences, tobacconists, gambling outlets).

The delay to agreeing Phase 2b of HS2 threatens to delay the benefits that wider connectivity is likely to bring to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area. According to [independent research cited by Birmingham City Council](#), HS2 could create 26,000 additional jobs in Birmingham and Solihull, as well as an average GVA increase of £680 per worker in the West Midlands.

### **Opportunities**

Preparations for Birmingham to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games offer the opportunity to further raise housing supply in the area. Organisers of the games plan to convert the £370m Athletes Village in Perry Barr on the former Birmingham City University into around 1,400 homes after the Games.

The Commonwealth Games provides an opportunity for the LEP area to expand its visitor economy and attract national and international visitors. According to the Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, the Games are expected to attract between 500,000 and 1 million visitors to the area during the Games creating significant consumer spend and demand for accommodation.

UK Central Solihull reflects the huge potential of the West Midlands and the integrated approach to delivery that makes it achievable. Solihull is an area of strong growth and high demand that is a net contributor to the Exchequer. UK Central brings together Solihull's world class business, transport and leisure assets to deliver a unique proposition in a high value environment. The scale of opportunity includes potential for: mixed-use floor space; up to 5,000 new homes, up to 77,500 new jobs delivering up to £4.1 billion additional GVA each year.

## **Towns and Local Centres Framework case study**

GBSLEP launched its Towns and Local Centres Framework on March 2019. The framework was developed with local authority partners to act as a guidance document for investment, setting good practice for regeneration and ensuring inclusive growth to improve the quality of life for all communities.

The Framework is designed to support smaller projects that add a sense of place, support local communities and economies that underpin larger investment programmes.

Informed by research carried out by ESPON, GBSLEP have adopted an eco-system approach to regenerating towns and local centres based on the understanding of the communities they serve, as well as strengthening existing assets.

As part of the approach, businesses, towns and local centre planners, and investors are encouraged to develop a network beyond their localities with the intention of creating robust and sustainable development plans that benefit the region.

To date, the framework and associated revenue fund, has supported eight projects, including Tamworth Gungate regeneration and Burton town centre.

## **Going Forward**

The importance of a sense of place and a quality of place is vital to a thriving and a healthy economy. Creating vibrant, exciting and inclusive places for people to live and work is key to retaining and attracting the talented people that our companies need to grow and thrive. The impacts of high quality place - making on local economies are well documented and are essential to maintaining sustainable economic growth as part of a Local Industrial Strategy.

GBSLEP have identified four key place-making constraints to future growth i) a lack of key employment sites ii) too costly and inflexible energy infrastructure iii) the need to maximise the opportunity and potential impact of large-scale infrastructure investments iv) constrained housing stock.

During 2018 the LEP began work, with neighbouring LEPs, exploring the opportunities for a pipeline of sites through the Strategic Employment Sites Study, which is due to report in 2019. Completion of the study will include making clear recommendations to address barriers to strategic employment sites and exploring the potential to develop a pipeline of sites to meet market demand.

The LEP will also build on its Towns and Local Centres Framework by supporting our local authority (and other) partners to develop individual town and local centres plans, develop an ecosystem/ economic geography approach to identifying key areas for investment benefiting the whole of the GBSLEP geography and carry out an audit of future workspace requirements in towns and local centres

### Application for research into Burton Town Centre, Station Street, regeneration plans

GBSLEP's Strategic Economic Plan, Enabling Fund, is allocated to projects that need to carry out early stage work to define a preferred option to implement further development. Projects may include, option

appraisals, master planning, feasibility studies and consultancy support etc. The Enabling Fund includes research into options for regenerating towns and local centres.

As part of a wider town regeneration plan, East Staffordshire Borough Council sought funding for research to look into options to develop the pedestrian area of Burton town centre.

Station Street is a key pedestrian area in Burton town centre however, it is lacking an identity and offer to businesses, residents and visitors. The town centre is also in need of modernisation.

The findings of the research were used to inform the redesign of Station Street as a public realm, making it a place that attracts businesses, shoppers and visitors.

Attracting more visitors to the town centre would therefore, create stronger conditions for business growth – strengthening local assets, supporting local businesses and creating jobs.

The Burton Town Regeneration Programme is set to regenerate the town centre to create a sense of place and identity for the town – at the same time, meeting GBSLEP’s place and business pillar, strategic, priorities.



Kidderminster Town Hall

**Local Authority Areas**

Birmingham
<b>Bromsgrove</b>
<b>Cannock Chase</b>
<b>East Staffordshire</b>
<b>Lichfield</b>
<b>Redditch</b>
Solihull
<b>Tamworth</b>
<b>Wyre Forest</b>

Local authorities in orange indicate that they are in two LEPs.

**Prepared on behalf of the Midlands Engine by:**



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