

# Blueprint sets out what the region needs from Government to level up the West Midlands

October 4, 2022



A blueprint setting out what is needed to level up the region was launched by the **West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)** at the Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham.

The 'Levelling Up Growth Prospectus' aims to fire up the regional economy by driving forward a new, green industrial revolution while attracting major private sector investment.

The WMCA and local authorities, working together with other partners, have already shown how effective the region is in shaping the drivers of economic growth. Over the last few years the region has developed an award-winning public transport system, delivered thousands of new homes and jobs on derelict industrial land, launched pioneering net zero retrofit schemes for old and cold homes and turned around a failing skills system.

The Prospectus sets out the tools needed to accelerate that levelling up still further to forge a West Midlands fit for the future, a region that is at the vanguard of the fight against climate change, tackles health and wealth inequalities and unlocks greater opportunities for all parts of society.

The Prospectus calls for greater powers and more flexibility over funding and investment so the region can build sustainable and affordable homes at scale and pace, deliver the transport and digital connections that businesses and communities need to prosper and thrive and provide additional support for high growth West Midlands sectors such as green energy, electric car manufacture and low carbon, modular homes.

The blueprint, which was showcased at the WMCA fringe event, 'A Trailblazer for devolution – how the West Midlands is delivering on Levelling Up', sits alongside and supports the WMCA's recently launched [Plan for Growth](#).

The Prospectus serves as long term vision for the West Midlands going beyond the current discussions with Government on a new Trailblazing Devolution Deal for the region.

It shows how the region can accelerate and expand its existing levelling up programme with:

- More flexible funding to build affordable, zero carbon homes and unlock stalled investment through new Investment Zones.
- New ways to encourage people onto public transport through mobility credit schemes, new e-mobility powers, and a dynamic role in Great British Railways
- Powers to help key growth sectors for the region flourish and drive innovation in low carbon businesses such as electric car manufacturing; battery production; low carbon, modular homes; and utilities such as wind and solar power.
- Greater control and influence over investment into the region's energy system so it is more resilient to price hike shocks and able to speed up the decarbonisation of infrastructure and industry.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands and WMCA Chair, said: "Levelling Up remains mission critical for our region and indeed the whole country. As we seek to supercharge our economic recovery, we must embrace the coming green industrial revolution and draw in private sector investment in order to bounce back.

"We have already made great strides here in the West Midlands – developing our public transport system, upskilling local residents, building thousands of new homes and unlocking hundreds of acres of derelict industrial land for development. We continue to rise to our #WM2041 net zero commitment – including via our pioneering retrofit schemes.

"But to build on this progress, we need the Government to give us the tools to go further and faster. This Prospectus sets out what we need to tackle the challenges we face in the weeks, months and years ahead. As the Prime Minister said, 'When the West Midlands succeeds, the country succeeds' so I urge the Government to back us all the way."

Councillor Brigid Jones, WMCA portfolio lead for levelling up and deputy leader of Birmingham City Council, added: "We are facing a cost-of-living crisis, driven by high inflation and soaring energy prices and the direct and indirect consequences of this crisis for the region's residents and businesses could be profound.

"But this Prospectus isn't just about tackling the challenges of today – it's also about our shared hopes for

the future. We want the West Midlands to be the home of a new, green industrial revolution. This document calls upon government to match our ambitions with their support, with proposals around local area energy systems to help reduce energy bills and support for innovation in areas such as battery technology.

“The Government must lay solid foundations for real recovery with sustainable and fair funding for local government. Through “double devolution” we can unlock a whole system approach to level up the nation. This Prospectus is a blueprint for how to do that.”

*Photo credit: West Midlands Combined Authority*