



Innovate
UK



West Midlands
Combined Authority



Innovate UK

West Midlands

Local Action Plan



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Foreword

By Indro Mukerjee



Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency. We drive productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas.

We are living in challenging times with constant change; it is also a time of significant opportunity to innovate and adapt. Our opportunity is to help improve the present and to accelerate the creation of the future.

There has never been a better time to focus on supporting our economy and society through innovation. Innovate UK will do this through the three axis by which we are organising ourselves; the Domains we support, the Products and Services we use, and the Places we operate within.

Innovate UK's Plan for Action outlines our commitment to work with leaders across the UK to develop innovation strategies that recognise the strengths and opportunities in their regions and nations. As an important milestone and a key example of this work,

I'm pleased to launch this Local Action Plan, for the West Midlands, which we have co-created with the West Midlands Combined Authority.

The West Midlands has a rich industrial heritage, and there are emerging innovation clusters that provide significant opportunities to help drive economic and societal improvements right across the region. This West Midlands Action Plan sets out key themes and our ambitions to fulfil those opportunities.

The Innovate UK team is ready to commit to working with partners across the West Midlands region, across the research and innovation ecosystem and across government to drive Place based impact through innovation.

Indro Mukerjee

Innovate UK CEO

Foreword

By Andy Street



As Mayor of the West Midlands I have the most exciting job going. I get to meet every day with pioneering companies, budding entrepreneurs, and some of the world's best scientists and industrialists. They tell me the West Midlands is a sleeping giant for the UK economy and through targeted investment and consistent strategy we can unlock a new industrial revolution.

The West Midlands is no longer a place that is just dependent on traditional manufacturing but rather we are seeing vibrant innovation clusters in every corner of our region covering advanced and green manufacturing, creative technologies, life sciences and health technologies, and modern professional services.

And we are an attractive place to invest and grow a business –

- A central and affordable location to do business across the UK and across the world. The West Midlands is within four hours of 90% of the UK, and High Speed Rail 2 (under construction) will connect Birmingham to London in under 40 minutes. Birmingham Airport is also one of the fastest growing in Europe and connects to over 400 global destinations

- A globally significant innovation ecosystem including eleven science and technology parks, six excellent universities in key fields, the Energy Systems Catapult and two centres of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult, as well as global brands including Jaguar Land Rover, Goldman Sachs, EON, Mondelez, BT, and Amazon
- A place of immense talent. One of the most diverse and youngest regions of the UK, we are home to 4.7 million residents. There are over 230,000 skilled workers within 45 minutes of the West Midlands, and our excellent universities generate over 70,000 graduates who come to study with us from 157 countries. We also retain talent in the region, with 61% of graduates staying on to work in the region after studying

Which is why I am delighted that Innovate UK is backing the potential of West Midlands businesses through this Action Plan, working with us to realise the full potential of our West Midlands Plan for Growth ambitions and once again rise to be a globally leading city region in the twenty first century.

Andy Street

Mayor of the West Midlands

Executive Summary

Innovate UK is committed to helping drive and deliver against the UK Government's vision to be a global hub for innovation by 2035. Innovate UK aims to grow, develop and commercialise products, services and processes, and support outstanding innovation ecosystems that are agile and inclusive.

Innovate UK is embedding Place as a strategic axis into everything we do in this spending review period and beyond, and contributing towards the Government's Levelling Up missions.

With the strengths and potential for economic growth and productivity gains in the West Midlands, it is the right moment to assess the progress being made and to identify further areas to work together in the region. To reaffirm the commitment and collaboration between Innovate UK and the West Midlands to achieve a coordinated approach in meeting our aligned goals.

This plan aims to provide a strategic focus for innovation in the West Midlands and an overview of how we can catalyse the actions of partners in the region to create impact.



This Local Action Plan recognises the strengths and positive trends in the local economy and our ambitions to grow stronger innovation clusters in the region



Principles and Core Areas

We will draw on the principles set out in our Plan for Action and work with leadership and wider partners across the West Midlands to deliver our innovation ambitions by:

- **Inspire:** inspiring more businesses to undertake all forms of innovation and to generate commercially valuable intellectual property (IP)
- **Involve:** working together across the West Midlands ecosystem to have a greater impact than we can separately
- **Invest:** aligning our existing resources and investments to ensure that we build on the insights, assets, and capabilities from across West Midlands

We will work with West Midlands Combined Authority and wider partners to deliver our strategic priorities through three core areas:

- **Strategic partnerships** to ensure we have the right relationships, with open and trusting discussions, maximizing local strengths and co-delivering this local action plan
- **Innovation support** that meets the needs of local businesses and entrepreneurs, is targeted at identified priority clusters, and is informed by the expertise and data shared between our organisations
- **Communication and engagement** to ensure we're reaching, engaging, and inspiring more entrepreneurs and business leaders to innovate

Context

National innovation

The global and UK landscapes have changed significantly over the last five years. Geopolitics, the climate emergency, the global pandemic, the ongoing energy supply crisis, increases in the cost of living, and turbulence in global economies have all disrupted established patterns and norms. This disruption has brought with it new challenges and new opportunities.

To thrive in these unprecedented times, innovation is a vital and fundamental element for business resilience and growth. Through innovation, we can improve the present and create a more prosperous future – one of good health, respect for our planet and environment, and a future of fairness, diversity and equality.

The UK Government is investing in research and development (R&D) at record levels as it strives to consolidate the UK's position as a science superpower and innovation nation

with increased private sector investment into R&D. The R&D mission in the 2022 Levelling Up White Paper outlines how these benefits will help local economies.

In November 2021, Innovate UK launched its **Plan for Action** outlining our approach to delivering the **Government's Innovation Strategy** through to 2025 and the vision for the UK to be a global hub for innovation by 2035.





Our Innovate UK Strategic Delivery Plan 2022-25 outlines how we will deliver on that plan through the development and commercialisation of new ideas supported by an outstanding innovation ecosystem that is agile, inclusive, and easy to navigate. This includes helping to maximise local strengths that can enhance UK capabilities and increase the regional and national impact of innovation clusters.

We have committed to work with local and national partners to build greater coherence between national economic plans, local growth strategies and the Government's overall innovation strategy. We committed also to co-develop local action plans with local leadership, leveraging the reach and breadth of UKRI collaborations.

This Local Action Plan sets out our shared ambition for the West Midlands. How we will work together in a systematic place-based approach through local to national co-creation, to drive greater innovation, resilience, productivity and growth.



West Midlands Perspective

Places

The West Midlands includes world-renowned cities including Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton – while also being home to historic market towns like Dudley, West Bromwich, Solihull, Warwick and Walsall.

People

As well as diverse places, equally diverse are the people and communities who proudly call the West Midlands their home. Its people have warmly welcomed settlers, immigrants, incomers and refugees for centuries, which is why it is one of the youngest and most ethnically diverse regions in the whole of Europe.

You'll find people from nearly 200 different countries rubbing shoulders on its streets, sharing their distinctive experiences, insights and traditions. That helps explain why it's one of the UK's most popular destination for overseas business visitors, attracting millions of foreign tourists every year to add even more international flavour.

Economic potential

The West Midlands contributes £100bn per year to the UK economy. Yet like many large conurbations across the UK, there is an opportunity to unlock new productivity gains to come closer to in line with other globally significant metropolitan areas.



The West Midlands is a rich blend of different places, people and perspectives

In the case of the West Midlands there is an 11% productivity gap with the Greater South East. The mix of sectors and clusters in the region suggests that it has high potential to be more productive, with major opportunities to increase levels of R&D, innovation and exports.

The Levelling Up Whitepaper sets out a twenty-first century recipe for a new Industrial Revolution, a contemporary Medici model that recognises that boosting productivity, improving public services, creating pride in place, and empowering localities in tandem is how to create more prosperous places.

Mission 2 of the Levelling Up Whitepaper specifically outlines the important role of high performing innovation ecosystems, backed by a once in a generation uplift in the Government science budget, to fertilise the soil for private sector investment in places.

This action plan is another tangible way the West Midlands is working with Government to put Levelling Up into practice.

Our Innovation History



Over the 20th century the West Midlands became the world's workshop for advancements and production in automotive and aerospace. In its heyday, more automotive vehicles were produced in our region than anywhere else in the world, and employment in the automotive industry reached 72% of the region's manufacturing workforce.

We were home to many “firsts” – the Watt Steam engine, the commercialisation of industrial plastic, the first petrol-driven car, and the invention of the Dunlop steel rods tyre.



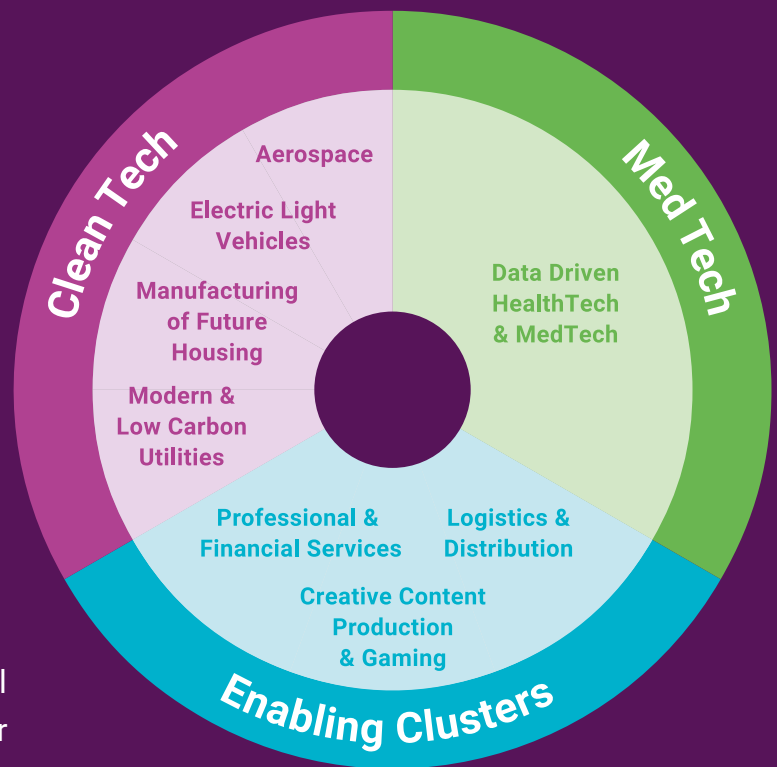
This smart industrial specialisation created thousands of good and productive jobs, but also a dependency on a small number of companies and industries. The recession of the 1970s was particularly damaging for the automotive industry, and had a deep social and economic impact.

Like many urban centres at the time, the region worked with its business, academic, and civic communities to innovate and reimagine a different destiny. We reinvented our economy looking towards the 21st century and to new markets and technologies.

The West Midlands benefitted from the rise of new knowledge clusters backed by investment and support from Government into our excellent universities and anchor businesses.

This region has forged an exciting innovation ecosystem driven by entrepreneurial endeavor and excellent research across internationally recognised universities. West Midlands universities educate 185,000 students and produce more than 60,000 graduates each year. Working closely with business and industry, their individual research and innovation specialisms combine to secure our region's economic future.

Today's Outlook



From 2010 to 2019, the West Midlands was one of the UK's fastest-growing regions outside of London testament to the strong foundations put in place by local leaders and the entrepreneurial spirit of our business base. But global events disrupted supply chains and led to shortages of key components that hold back businesses selling into national and global markets.

To stimulate an economic bounce-back, in Summer 2022 partners across the region launched the West Midlands Plan for Growth. The Plan for Growth pinpoints the clusters and technologies that can shift the West Midlands into the next gear of economic recovery.

Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field. Businesses increasingly tell us that looking at clusters can help us to better support growth.

The Plan for Growth identifies eight primary clusters where the West Midlands has comparative advantage and where businesses are confident to invest. These are shown in the graphic above and comprise around 12%-15% of the West Midlands economy. You can find more information about all eight clusters in the [West Midlands Plan for Growth](#).

These clusters create innovation-led growth opportunities across the region. Combining the power of private and public sectors around them provides a credible path for the region to return to being one of the fastest growing.

To best exploit the innovation spillovers, the region's innovation strategy focuses on three technology families:

- Clean tech
- Med tech
- Enabling clusters

Clean Tech: Electric Light Vehicles and Aerospace



The West Midlands has a strong presence of leading car manufacturers, including London Taxis, Jaguar Land Rover, Aston Martin, Lotus Engineering and Lagonda. The West Midlands also plans to host a Gigafactory, demonstration sites for future mobility, and build the associated supply chain capacity to design and manufacture technologies including battery electrodes, cell assembly, and digital mobility systems. This is a significant global market opportunity – electric vehicle ownership is forecast to rise to 30 million by 2023 and autonomous vehicles may disrupt the mobility sector further in the medium-term.

The region's Tier 1 aerospace companies - Collins Aerospace, Moog Aircraft Group, Parker Meggitt and Rolls-Royce - research, develop, design and manufacture advanced electronic, mechanical and hydraulic systems that control the moving parts of Airbus, Boeing and other aircraft and helicopters and their engines, as well as heat management systems for extreme aerospace temperature environments. The High Temperature Research Centre (HTRC), a joint venture between the University of Birmingham and Rolls-Royce, draws on the region's rich heritage in advanced metal alloys.

The region has allied R&D facilities to transition supply chains to electrification, alternative fuels, and autonomous mobility systems – **Warwick Manufacturing Group** (WMG), the **Manufacturing Technology Centre** (MTC), the **UK Battery Industrialisation Centre**, the Coventry-based **National Transport Design Centre**, the **National Automotive Innovation Centre**, **MIRA Technology Park**, and the **Advanced Propulsion Centre**.



Clean Tech: Modern and Low Carbon Facilities

The West Midlands is home to the National Grid, Western Power, Severn Trent Water, and has leading capability in utilities distribution. There are also supply chain strengths for wind, solar PV, and biomass, with opportunities to pivot to clean technologies including heat-pumps and **BioChar**. Leading R&D assets in the region include the **Energy Systems Catapult**, **Energy and Bioproducts Research Institute** and **Tyseley Energy Park**.



Clean Tech: Manufacture of Future Housing

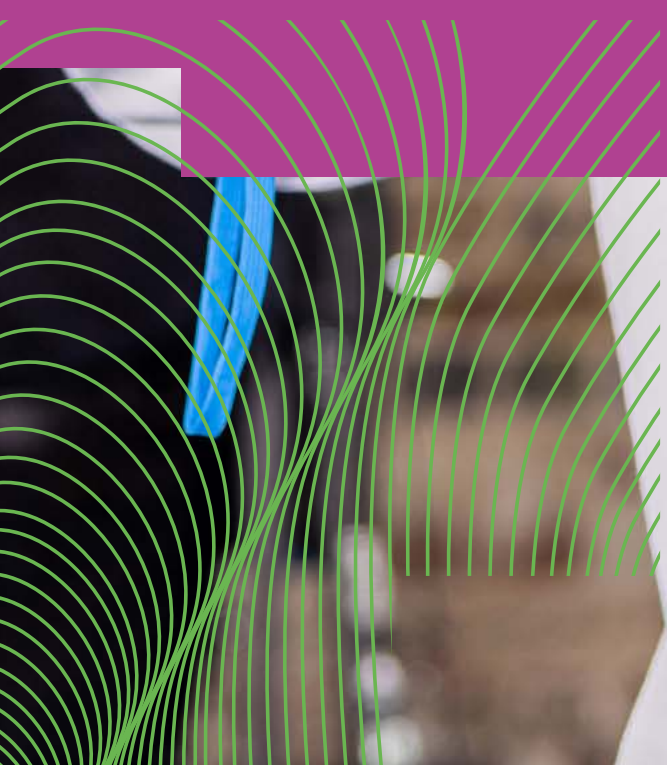
One of the major net zero shifts required in this decade is the transition to building and retrofitting homes to a low carbon standard. The region is ideally located as a production centre for modern methods of construction factories, benefiting from being within four hours of 90% of the UK, and with a large demand locally for more modular building techniques in the future.

The West Midlands has relevant R&D assets particularly clustered around Wolverhampton including the **National Brownfield Institute** and the **Business & Technology Centre**. There are also associated materials innovation and additive manufacturing strengths in the region, including at the **MTC** who hold industrial standard additive manufacturing equipment and conduct R&D on new and novel materials.

Med Tech

The West Midlands is home to 5,400 medical technologies companies, the largest concentration in the UK. Benefitting from our close proximity to the Oxford and Cambridge life sciences clusters, the region's plan to attract and support more firms to scale up is to focus on collaborations with IP rich universities with research strengths in life sciences and associated med-tech. Over time our aim is to also attract larger life sciences and med-tech firms to increase global supply chain opportunities for SMEs.

To meet the regional and national shortage of lab space, the **Birmingham Health Innovation Campus** is being developed as a collaboration between Bruntwood and the University of Birmingham.



Enabling Digital

The West Midlands has a fast-growing creative tech scene across Birmingham, Coventry, and Warwickshire. Recent investment from the BBC in Birmingham (Digbeth) adds new opportunities for clustering in and around the Birmingham Knowledge Quarter and the Birmingham Innovation Quarter. The Birmingham Knowledge Quarter has recently developed **STEAMhouse**, a £74m state of the art innovation campus, and with a sister STEAMhouse building in the Punjab India.

Leamington Silicon Spa also accounts for more than 10% of the UK's total gaming jobs and is home to more than 3,000 digital businesses. Priorities include protecting the existing growth of the Leamington Spa gaming cluster, and growing our wider immersive-tech scene, through better access to talent, investment, co-working spaces, and media supply chain opportunities for digital SMEs.

The cluster is underpinned by regional capability in 5G and modern digital infrastructure. In 2018, Birmingham, Coventry, and Wolverhampton were awarded £50m to lead **5G testbeds** covering digital health, low latency and AI enabled CCTV, and autonomous vehicles. Innovate UK collaborated with **West Midlands 5G** to deliver some of this funding to businesses and research partners.



Vodafone and Coventry University have collaborated to open the UK's first 5G Standalone (5G SA) Media Innovation Lab in Coventry, and the **Digital Catapult** is part of the consortium creating the UK's first 5G application accelerator, enabling over 650 West Midlands businesses and public sector bodies in the region to use a 5G live network.

The West Midlands has among the best 5G coverage outside the greater South East (65% geographical coverage). This has fast-tracked innovation opportunities across the region and creates the conditions for R&D and innovation to flourish.

5G has cross-cutting capabilities for our work on clean-tech and med-tech. As an example, **Coventry University has received Innovate UK funding** to enable a multi-city, multi-operator, and multi-purpose self-driving trial across Birmingham NEC and Coventry University.

Innovate UK in the West Midlands

Over recent years Innovate UK has better aligned national and local strategies and plans for business innovation by focusing on areas where we have shared priorities. We are also continuing to work closely with the region's leadership to improve collaboration and drive innovation.

The West Midlands benefits from major investments made through Innovate UK including:

- The West Midlands Innovation Accelerator
- High Value Manufacturing (HVM) Catapult, including two of its seven centres:
 - WMG
 - Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC)
- Energy Systems Catapult
- UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC)



West Midlands Innovation Accelerator

During 2022-23, Innovate UK co-created the £100m Innovation Accelerator (IA) programme with local partners and Government, and the West Midlands was one of three regions that benefited from a third of the investment. The programme is pioneering a new model of R&D decision-making that empowers local leaders to harness innovation in support of regional economic growth. The West Midlands leadership has selected five projects to accelerate growth in Health and Clean Technology.

Through one of those projects, the IA programme is funding the West Midlands Innovation Programme 2.0 and its network of eight cluster bodies that drive forward the West Midlands Plan for Growth. Each cluster body is led by an industry body/group and are inclusive and open forums to shape regional priorities for action.

Through the Innovation Accelerator, the Connected Places Catapult has also been awarded funding to strengthen its West Midlands footprint by undertaking high impact projects.



WMG, part of the HVM Catapult, is changing the way we travel for the better. It specialises in innovation aimed at making transport cleaner, safer and more efficient and is working with UK manufacturing partners to develop automated, connected, electric and shared mobility for a sustainable future.

Between March 2018 and March 2023 WMG has undertaken projects with 1,962 businesses. 40% of these were based in West Midlands.



During the height of the national lockdown in 2020, the Black Country-based Ramfoam secured a contract to supply UK government with 3.5 million face visors per week. To achieve this, they had to scale their operation by 300 times its production output.

With WMG's digital manufacturing and supply chain support, they reached this target. This created 550 new jobs locally and secured a further 750 in the supply chain.



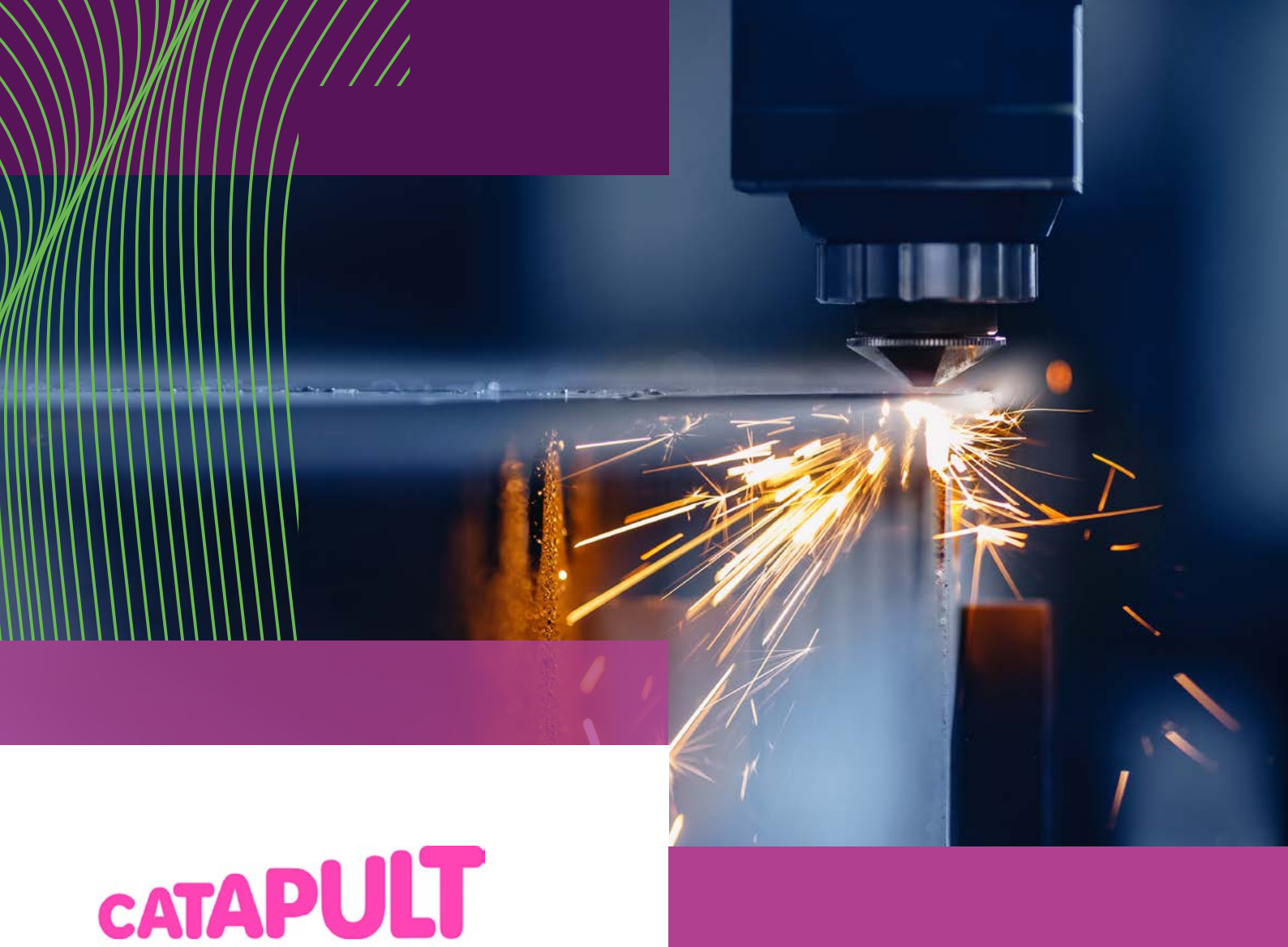
Established in 2010, the MTC, part of the HVM Catapult, focuses on areas including automation, factory modelling and simulation, additive manufacturing, laser welding and non-conventional machining. MTC's rapid growth has seen the expansion of its campus with the construction of three more facilities, including the Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre and the National Centre for Additive Manufacturing.

During the 2022/23 financial year, the MTC supported 1,045 businesses, over 19% of which were based in the West Midlands.



Coventry-based precision aerospace supplier Harris RCS achieved a 10% increase in its forward order book and 20% productivity gains with the help of MTC.

Harris RCS was struggling with waste and efficiency. MTC helped by transforming their manual, fragmented processes with digital solutions to drive productivity, efficiency and waste reduction.



CATAPULT

Energy Systems

The Energy Systems Catapult (ESC) accelerates the transformation of the UK's energy systems, identifying priorities and market barriers for decarbonisation. In the last five financial years, ESC received £52 million in core funding through Innovate UK.

Working directly with net zero innovators to test, trial and scale their ideas, ESC's vision is to capture the clean growth opportunity, ensuring UK businesses and consumers accelerate us towards net zero by 2050.

ventive

Ventive are creating 40 new jobs in a new manufacturing facility in Worcestershire to deliver 7,500 smart, whole-house retrofit solutions, with the aim to rise to 100,000 by 2025.

Ventive received support through ESC's Energy Launchpad accelerator. Since 2019, the Energy Launchpad has raised £130million and supported 217 SMEs, of which 24 are based in the West Midlands.



**UK BATTERY
INDUSTRIALISATION
CENTRE**

Opened in July 2021, the £130m UKBIC is the UK's national battery manufacturing development facility. It is part of the Faraday Battery Challenge, an Innovate UK (UKRI) investment that has the aim of building a UK high-tech, high-value, high-skill battery industry.

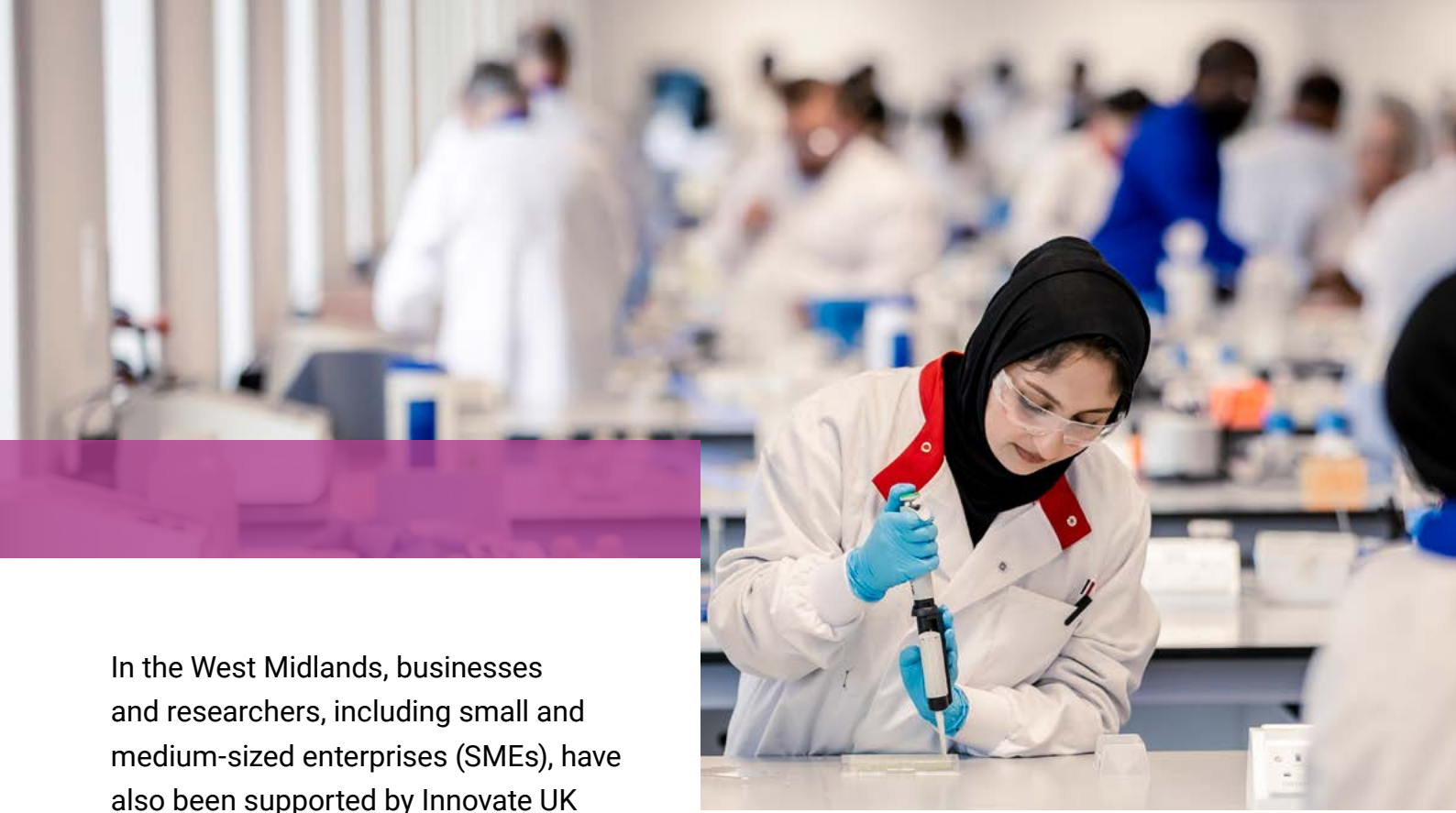
UKBIC helps companies to scale and commercialise battery technologies, and to upskill workers in battery manufacturing. UKBIC enables companies to reduce the capital cost of entry barriers, reduce risk, and increase investor or customer confidence in new technologies.

UKBIC was delivered through a consortium of Coventry City Council, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, and WMG, following a funding competition led by the Advanced Propulsion Centre. Funding was provided through Innovate UK, plus £18m of co-funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority via a repayable grant.



Flexible Industrialisation Line

A further £36m of Faraday Battery Challenge funding has been announced for a new Flexible Industrialisation Line (FIL) – set to open in 2025 - to provide a flexible and cost-effective route to commercialisation. FIL will be owned and located at UKBIC and operated jointly with WMG to facilitate effective technology transfer from research into industrialisation.



In the West Midlands, businesses and researchers, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), have also been supported by Innovate UK EDGE and Innovate UK KTN.

Innovate UK EDGE has well established ways of working with the business support agencies in the West Midlands. During financial years 21-22 and 22-23, Innovate UK EDGE provided intensive support to 356 innovation-focused businesses in the West Midlands, including 14 who took part in our Scaleup Programme for the most dynamic businesses.

Innovate UK KTN provides support on Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) as part of their offer. The KTP programme connects businesses with innovation ideas to research-base expertise, enabling projects that improve competitiveness, productivity and performance through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills. Up to 60% of the cost of a KTP can be met by Innovate UK.

In the West Midlands there have been 219 KTPs since 2018.



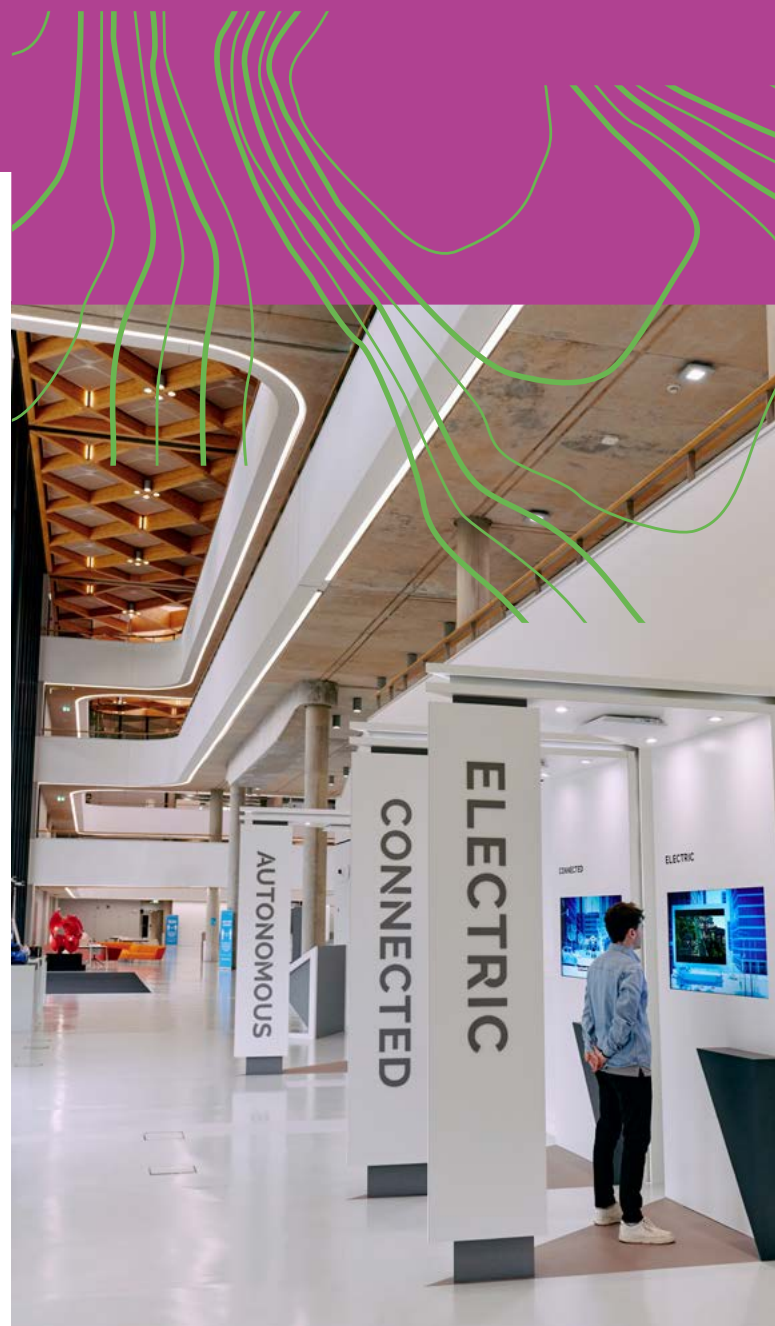
Evac+Chair identified the opportunity to solve a challenge by partaking in a KTP to reduce the impact on neonates (babies under four weeks old) during transit in ambulances.

Evac+Chair enlisted the help of Birmingham City University's School of Architecture and Design academics to support the design and development of a g-force reduction ambulance trolley that can also safeguard the neonate in the event of an ambulance crash of up to 40MPH.

Innovate UK Funding in the West Midlands

In the four years since 2019/20, Innovate UK has invested over £935m into organisations and innovation infrastructure in the West Midlands. The West Midlands is a clear hot spot for Innovate UK funding, especially when the overall number of businesses in the region is considered. This funding pattern is set out further in UKRI's Geographical distribution of funding reports, drawing attention that the West Midlands has been consistently in the top 3 regions for total Innovate UK spend and moves to the top when that spend is contextualised against the number of businesses in the region.

£747m of this, representing four fifths of Innovate UK's West Midlands investment, has enabled national research and innovation infrastructure. As highlighted in the previous section, this includes UKBIC, the Energy Systems Catapult, and the national assets of the HVM Catapult.



Supporting SMEs'

In that same time period, almost £95m of our funding has gone directly to businesses across the region. Plus over £81m awarded to academic and research organisations for supporting business innovation and strengthening the relationship between industry and academia. This is particularly important for SMEs who are less likely to have the research capability in-house and need external research organisations to help progress new ideas to commercialisation.

There is more we can do to support the region to boost innovation activity. The West Midlands Combined Authority (and partners) and Innovate UK are committing to undertake the actions in this plan to drive forward local change to enable our shared ambitions and goals.



NanoSyrinx

NanoSyrinx is an award-winning, discovery stage biotechnology company that develops protein 'nanosyringes' as a novel modality for targeted, intracellular delivery of protein and peptide biologic drugs. The company is a spin-out from the University of Warwick, is based in Coventry and currently employs >12 FTEs.

NanoSyrinx has benefited from both Innovate UK's ICURe and Investor Partnership programmes. The Innovate UK support hugely increased the company's capabilities during its pre-seed funding period, unlocking £6M in further investment in 2021.

Aligning Ambitions



Innovate UK is committed to embedding Place as one of the axis to everything we will do in this spending review period and beyond, contributing towards the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

The needs of innovative businesses will vary from place to place. We will tailor our support to build capacity, stimulate greater connectivity between local businesses and the research base to improve productivity. We will support local businesses to adopt new knowledge, skills, and cutting-edge technologies and use them to deliver greater productivity and economic impact. We will join forces with organisations across the West Midlands to unlock the power of untapped innovation. Working together on the Innovate UK No Limits initiative, we will focus on inspiring future innovators and addressing disparities in funding and support for innovation.

Delivering the Plan for West Midlands

The foundation of the plan is our relationship with West Midlands leadership for increasing business innovation and working closely with West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) who are the custodians of their Devolution Deal with Government.



Core Areas and Actions

We will work with WMCA and wider partners to deliver our strategic priorities through three core areas:

Strategic Partnerships with open and transparent discussions, based on mutual trust and co-creating and delivering this plan.

Innovation Support that meets the needs of local businesses and entrepreneurs, is targeted at identified priority clusters, and is informed by the expertise and data shared between our organisations.

Communications and engagement to ensure we're reaching, engaging, and inspiring more entrepreneurs and business leaders to innovate.

The next sections outline the commitments we will jointly deliver across these core areas.

Strategic partnership

WMCA and Innovate UK will:

1. Co-investment opportunities

Continue to develop programmes in which we can jointly invest to grow local innovation clusters and develop a pipeline of activities to drive inclusive innovation in the West Midlands. For example:

- Informing each other of potential new programmes to ensure there is local promotion and participation, as well as increasing the opportunity for complementary efforts
- Coordinate on early-stage support for potentially fast-growth digital firms to secure their “first mile” investments
- Ensure adequate resource is allocated to underpin the success of this Local Action Plan through collaborative working arrangements



2. Increasing investment

Using our joint convening power to ensure national agencies and West Midlands partners are joined up on relevant investment activities, including UKRI Research Councils, Government bodies and British Business Bank. We will encourage and attract more local and foreign investment into the region.

3. Innovate UK presence

Ensure the full suite of Innovate UK products and services, including Innovate UK EDGE and Innovate UK KTN, and Research Council support is understood across the West Midlands and via **Business Growth West Midlands**.

4. Accessibility, talent and skills

Talent comes from all walks of life and is found in every corner of the West Midlands. Diversity in all its forms promotes a different way of thinking and brings novel and new perspectives to R&D and innovation endeavours. Nurturing a diverse talent pipeline is critical to develop the skilled workforce that our innovative businesses need.

We will engage positively with the No Limits mission initiated by Innovate UK to unlock the power of untapped talent for innovation and build an inclusive and accessible innovation system.

We will support young innovators to accelerate their R&D and innovation ideas and bring forward new cadre of diverse and entrepreneurial next gen businesses.

We will explore the potential of leveraging industry relationships to support further education colleges to increase business innovation in the region.

We will work together to understand the innovation skills gap and explore programmes of inclusive innovation support to address the skills gaps, inequalities and disadvantages impacting communities in the West Midlands.

5. Sharing data and business intelligence

We will work together to share data stemming from our initiatives including the Innovation Accelerator, accessibility, talent and skills programmes, and future programmes, to ensure we monitor the progress of collaborative programmes and initiatives.





Innovation Support

We will connect and align our services and programmes to realise the R&D and innovation potential of the West Midlands.

This means realising our distinctive national and local leadership roles as an integral part of the ecosystem and taking action to support the regional capabilities in:

- Clean-tech
- Med-tech and health-tech
- Enabling clusters

We will begin by addressing the following opportunities and barriers to growth:

1. Clean-tech

- Leverage the excellent universities and Catapults in the region to support manufacturers to pivot to higher value manufacturing in emergent industries
- Promote SME opportunities for innovation in electric fuel cells, light vehicles, and battery storage, leveraging the **planned Gigafactory at Coventry Airport**
- Support more business-led green R&D and innovation in and around the **Wolverhampton Green Innovation Corridor**
- Develop public sector led innovation procurement opportunities relating to clean technologies with local authorities and other regional partners



2. Med-tech

- Accelerate the access and use of regional healthcare data for business-led R&D and innovation
- Promote the **Birmingham Health Innovation Campus** as a fast growing primary location in the region to locate and scale life sciences and med-tech companies
- Seek to attract a large, international life sciences and/or med-tech firm to the region

3. Digital

- Facilitate greater collaboration and innovation spillovers across Birmingham, Coventry, and Warwick-Leamington creative tech cluster communities
- Promote the Birmingham **Knowledge Quarter** and the Birmingham Innovation Quarter as leading places to locate and scale digital companies



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM





Communications and Engagement

WMCA and Innovate UK will work together on:

1. Joint communications

In areas that supports the ambitions of both parties.

- We will ensure our activities and programmes are promoted and accessible to under-represented communities
- We will celebrate a diverse range of innovation leaders across the West Midlands through impact stories and events

2. Improving visibility

We will align Business Growth West Midlands with the development of Innovate UK's **Innovation Hub**, to ensure the opportunities for West Midlands' innovators are always easy to find.

- Innovate Local events

West Midlands leadership and Innovate UK will work to connect national to local, to ensure businesses in different parts of the region are aware of the breadth of support available. We will start by hosting an Innovate Local: Black Country event to inspire innovation and promote opportunities to businesses and diverse communities

- Innovation roadshow

Building on the flagship Innovate Local events, we will hold workshops and drop-in sessions across wider areas of the region, working with Business Growth West Midlands

Monitoring, Delivery and Outcomes



Innovate UK and the WMCA will have the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this plan. The plan is intended to be an agile and evolving document, which responds to local needs and economic pressures over the next 3 years.

Reviews will take place annually. At each review we will assess progress against the actions and create a delivery plan for the subsequent year, evolving existing and creating new actions as appropriate, in line with the principles and core areas in which we have agreed to work.

The overarching outcome of the West Midlands Local Action Plan is that, by working in partnership with WMCA and the local ecosystem, we will ensure West Midlands businesses are more resilient and will help them to grow through innovation. This will subsequently grow the West Midlands economy contributing to national economic growth.



The high-level impacts for the West Midlands are:

- Higher levels of public and private finance for businesses to innovate and grow
- More resilient and innovation active businesses in West Midlands
- Greater diversity of people involved in innovation
- More and better jobs for people in West Midlands
- A stronger entrepreneurial culture leading to innovative start-ups and university spin-outs
- A more attractive location for inward investment and stronger international trade

And the additional national contributions are:

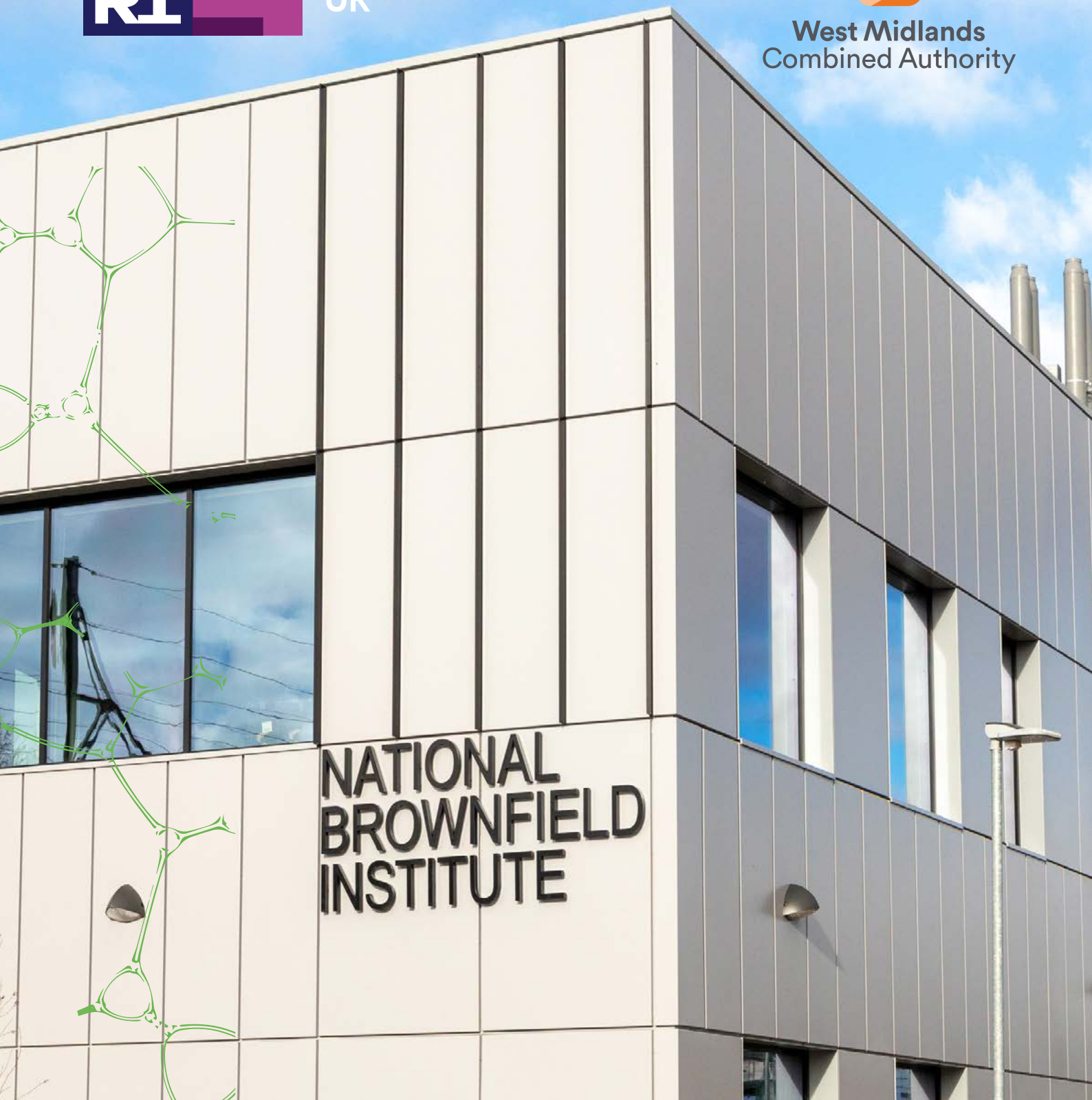
- More innovative businesses developing solutions to national and global challenges
- Supporting scale and positioning innovation businesses in value supply chains of the future to disrupt global markets
- Higher national productivity
- A stronger UK-wide research and innovation ecosystem cementing the UK's position as a science superpower and innovation nation



Innovate
UK



West Midlands
Combined Authority



NATIONAL
BROWNFIELD
INSTITUTE

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