

# **EAST BIRMINGHAM NORTH SOLIHULL Strategy**

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# Foreword

The East Birmingham North Solihull (EBNS) Strategy is an ambitious framework for achieving long-term change for the 375,000 people who live in this area. This corridor – stretching from Birmingham City Centre to UK Central in Solihull – is made up of young, culturally and economically diverse communities poised to benefit from transformative investment in the area.

We know that EBNS represents a major growth opportunity for the UK and for the West Midlands. Through High Speed 2, the UK Government is investing tens of billions in transport connectivity. EBNS is uniquely well placed to benefit as it is a corridor bookended by two new high-speed stations that will place residents within 38-45 minutes travel from central London and increased local services. But realising the benefit of that opportunity for local residents will require careful, consistent and long-term intervention, with partners working together, to dismantle the barriers holding back EBNS residents and to connect them to the opportunities.

While there has been programmes over several decades to improve connectivity, health outcomes, and economic opportunity, we recognise that these have been insufficient and as a result too few of our residents have benefited from economic growth and investment in the region.

Although East Birmingham and North Solihull are administrated separately, by Birmingham City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council respectively, the two share a common history, and EBNS is an economic area where today many residents live, work and learn across the municipal borders. Therefore, to ensure the area as a whole benefits from the opportunities ahead, we have come together to renew our commitment to a long-term partnership approach to invest in the future of EBNS.

We see it as imperative that as we invest in better infrastructure in ENBS, in part empowered by a new Growth Zone enabling business rate retention, we work with communities to co-design and deliver how they can benefit from a successful economy including through new jobs and with access to them by residents living in EBNS. Our two local authorities will also work closely with local, regional and national delivery partners to bring forward improvements in areas such as early years, youth employment support and primary and preventative care. Collectively the goal is to deliver long-term renewal for East Birmingham and North Solihull, as a flagship for inclusive growth across the West Midlands and the UK.

***Placeholder for Leaders signatures***

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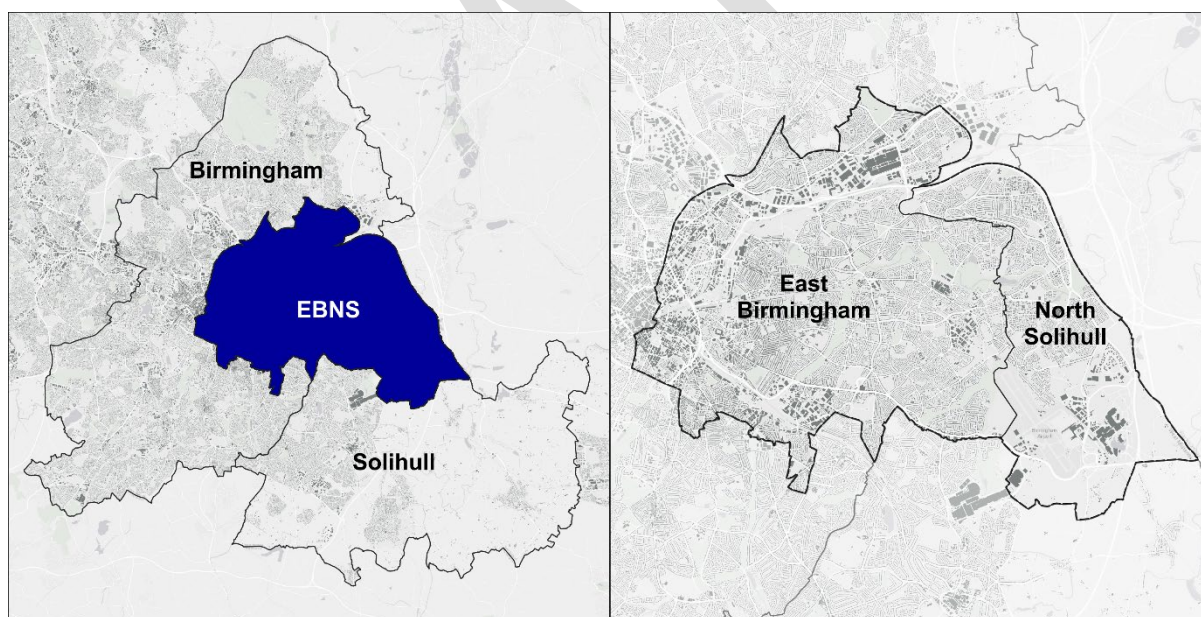
# Executive Summary

The East Birmingham and North Solihull (EBNS) Strategy is designed to accelerate and drive growth in an inclusive way that delivers lasting benefits to local people and the EBNS area and with reforms to public services to better serve residents. This will be achieved by attracting, prioritising and delivering sustained public and private investment over the long term and through a co-ordinated programme and approach. It is underpinned by a strong shared commitment between Birmingham City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to delivery this approach.

## Meeting the inclusive growth challenge in EBNS







EBNS (as defined in Figure 1) is a young, vibrant, socially, culturally and economically diverse region home to 375,000 residents. It has strong economic potential, sitting between the city centre in Birmingham and UK Central in Solihull. Both economic centres are set to be significantly enhanced by new HS2 stations. However, too little of the benefit of economic growth within and around EBNS is currently retained within the area or experienced by its residents; and communities face the largest concentration of deprivation outside of London.

**Figure 1. The East Birmingham North Solihull area**



The residents of EBNS are held back by a lack of access to jobs, skills and health challenges, housing needs, underutilisation of economic sites, poor transport connectivity and access to green space. These issues cut across administrative boundaries and require a place-based approach to address them through reforming and enhancing local services and delivering investment to spur the opportunities for growth. Tackling the issues faced by local people in an integrated way forms the basis of the long-term objectives we have for the area:

**Figure 2. Long term objectives for EBNS**

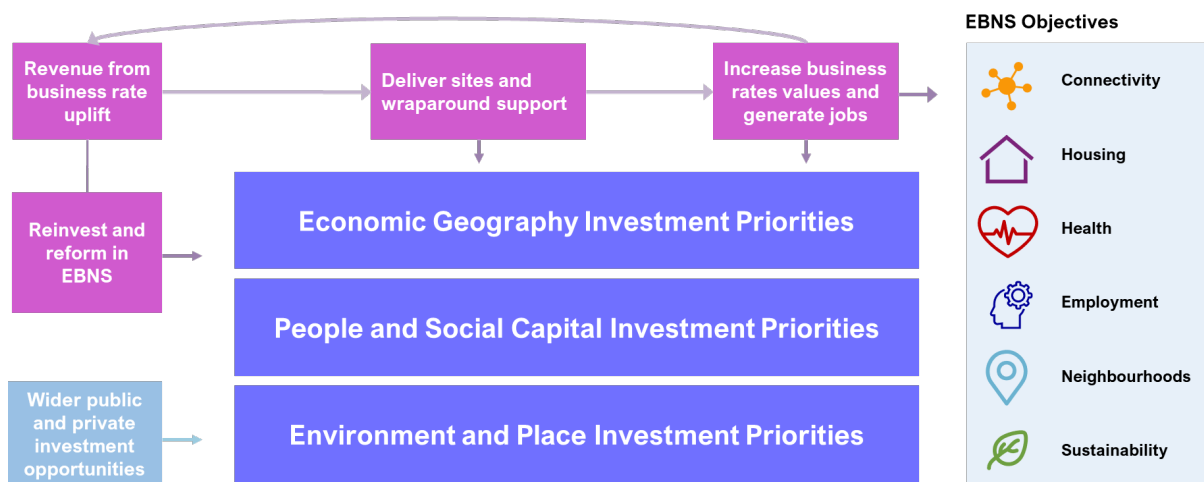
	<b>Improved transport and digital connectivity</b> to link residents to <b>key employment opportunities</b> , essential services and stimulate the growth of effective businesses.
	<b>High quality housing across a range of tenures and typologies</b> , providing good value to residents and well located with access to employment and wider opportunities.
	Increased <b>healthy life expectancy and better health at all life stages</b> , particularly in early years, with more years spent in good health for all our residents, and fewer deaths due to preventable causes.
	<b>Raising innovation, productivity and entrepreneurship to provide new employment opportunities</b> (in or near area) and an education/skills system that supports residents to access high-quality jobs, with integrated public services delivering better local outcomes.
	<b>Safe, affordable and accessible high-quality neighbourhoods</b> will provide residents with attractive and liveable spaces that will increase quality of life and satisfaction.
	<b>Sustainable solutions, increasing biodiversity, improving air quality</b> , and reducing carbon emissions whilst advancing innovative solutions to retro fit existing building stock.

### Prioritising for the long term

We will deliver these objectives and outcomes by using existing and new powers, regional funding streams, and private investment, driven by a set of clear investment priorities. The tools we have **include the “Growth Zone” business rate retention mechanism** for key development sites which was agreed as part of the [West Midlands Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal](#) and is a key enabler for positive change in EBNS.

By **aligning ongoing and new investment with long-term investment priorities** (set out below in figure 3), we will be able to achieve sustained positive change. The vision is to achieve the change over a period of 25 years, mirroring the length of the business rate mechanism that is in place. The vision involves rethinking models of service delivery and collaboration, spurring growth through transformative employment-led sites, attracting businesses, enhancing local skills access to job, improving infrastructure including transport connectivity, and re-investing proceeds of that growth to benefit local communities. This model, which will be supplemented by a theory of change and taken forward within each of the respective local authority-level objectives and delivery plans. The initial draft of this is below:

**Figure 3. Aligning investment with the developing EBNS theory of change**



## Delivery approach

We will **amplify the impact of existing opportunities** through aligning the EBNS programme with strategic initiatives such as the West Midlands Local Growth Plan, the Birmingham Knowledge Quarter Investment Zone (IZ) and Birmingham City Centre Enterprise Zone (EZ).

Delivering and catalysing the change need in the local economy will require **new ways of working and strategic partnerships, increasing investment and shaping how we deliver public services locally**. We will build on the strong foundations laid by both councils Corporate Plans the East Birmingham Board and. Partnership working, co-development and co-design between all relevant local partners will be fundamental to success. Key features of the delivery process will include:

- New governance arrangements, drawing in the IZ, EZ, the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), government partners (such as the Department for Work & Pensions), and other partners and investors to be part of a shared approach and to set direction.
- Separate delivery and decision-making structures within BCC and SMBC recognising the different maturity and requirements of sites.
- New, more collaborative ways of working with partners, co-developing and shaping interventions.

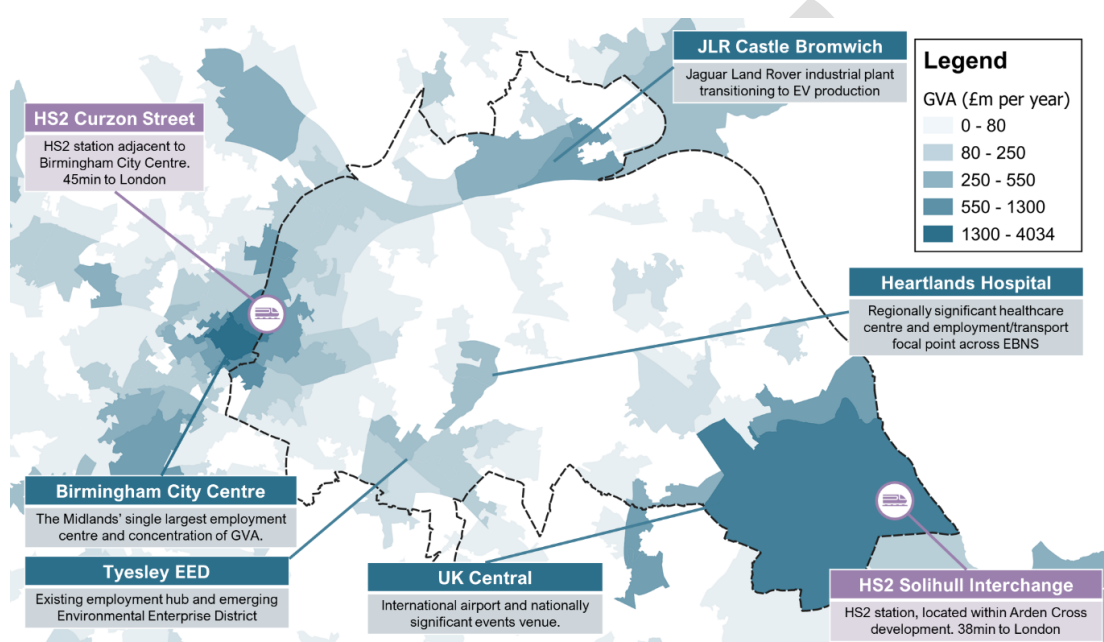
We have a unique opportunity for a step change in how we deliver service, inclusive growth and long-term renewal for East Birmingham and North Solihull, as a flagship for the West Midlands and for the UK-wide growth mission.



# I. Introduction

East Birmingham and North Solihull (EBNS), home to 375,000 residents, is young, vibrant, socially, culturally and economically diverse. It stretches from the edge of Birmingham city centre to Arden Cross in Solihull on the eastern boundary of the West Midlands conurbation. Birmingham city centre and Birmingham airport/NEC complex in Solihull are two of the UK's largest sources of job creation, while billions of pounds of government investment are enabling two HS2 stations to take shape at each end of the corridor. EBNS also hosts several key development sites and with significant scope for future economic growth.

**Figure 4. Economic output and major assets in and around EBNS**



ONS, GVA by Lower-Level Super Output Area (2023 Release). Rounded natural breaks.

However, too little of the wealth currently generated by economic growth manifests in opportunities for residents, or in spend in the local economy. EBNS residents face deep-rooted barriers to achieving their potential, with entrenched deprivation and the single largest concentration of highly deprived neighbourhoods outside of London. These challenges are explored in more detail below. Constraints on the ability of residents to contribute holds back their potential and that of the city and wider region. This dynamic is at the heart of the inclusive growth challenge in EBNS.

There is a unique opportunity to change this in how we deliver services achieve long-term renewal and benefit citizens. There is substantial investment underway in HS2 and which will reshape the geography and opportunities ahead. There is the potential of a series of key development sites and for major public service reform. Both local authorities have strong ambitions alongside a series of local projects and programmes. The 2023 [West Midlands Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal](#) brings new powers and funding to the region with potential for EBNS while the area has the potential to be part of the West Midlands Growth Plan and part of the government's growth and opportunity missions.

This Investment Strategy sets out the ambitions for EBNS and how these can be achieved, harnessing the investment and opportunities to sustainably grow the local economy, enhance the EBNS as a place, and driving a step change in how residents benefit from

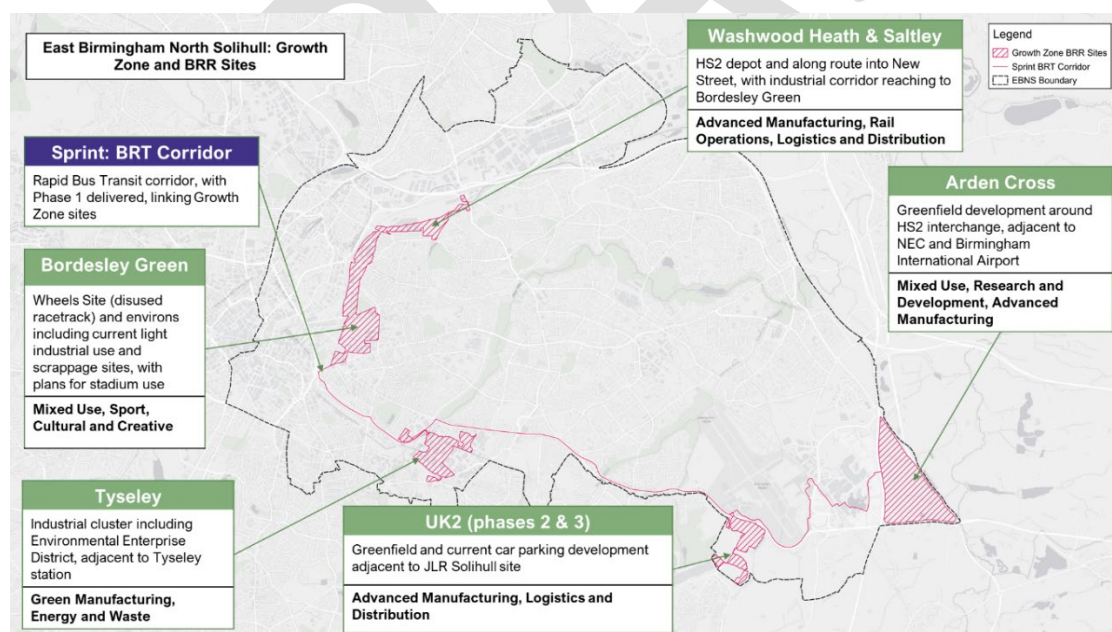
growth and investment and including with the outcomes and wellbeing of residents being improved.

The strategy and approach has been developed by Birmingham City Council (BCC) and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC). We have come together, with partners, to deepen our commitment to partnership working and to invest in EBNS. Over the 25-year lifespan of this strategy, BCC and SMBC will lead delivery by developing new public service interventions and supporting greater investment in transport, infrastructure and jobs in the area. It builds on decades of work by a range of organisations, most recently set out in the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Living Well in Solihull Strategy . It is underpinned by a strong evidence base and good practice.

The approach set out in this strategy involves developing and harnessing long-term funding and investment. We will deliver the best returns for EBNS residents by aligning existing and new powers and funding streams with the right investment priorities, including the “Growth Zone” business rate retention mechanism agreed with the government as part of the Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal.

The programme is well placed to be a flagship programme in the West Midlands Growth Strategy and as part of the government’s growth and opportunity missions. The priorities and long-term actions set out in this strategy align closely with new powers devolved to WMCA, including increased control of housing and transport funding and the future integrated settlement. These powers and funding can also align with other local economic growth programmes and assets including the Birmingham City Centre Enterprise Zone (EZ) and UK Central as well as national government initiatives such as the National Wealth Fund.

**Figure 5. Growth Zone sites in EBNS with potential opportunities and sectors**



Delivery will require new ways of working and strategic partnerships that are catalysts for change. With the right resource and commitment to shared priorities, we can deliver substantial positive additional benefits. This will mean engaging with and working alongside residents, the public and private sector, and voluntary, community, faith organisations social enterprises, innovators and elected representatives. It will involve rethinking models of service delivery and collaboration and spurring growth through transformative commercial and mixed-use development and through local system design to prioritise local benefits.



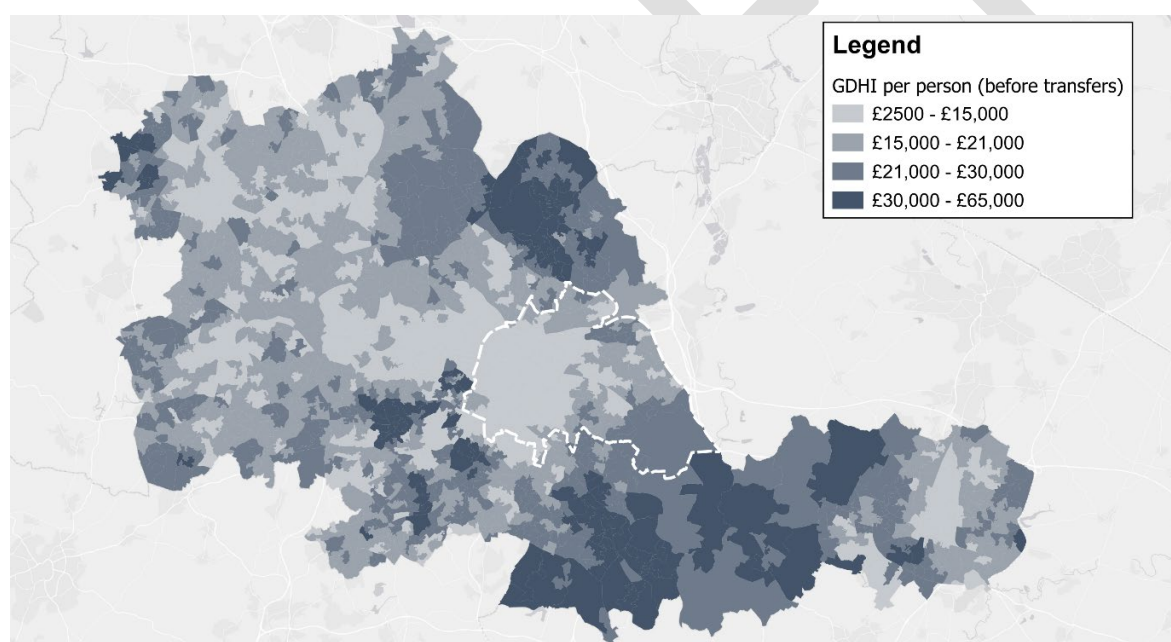
A series of challenges stand in the way of EBNS as a flourishing and vibrant place and economy and hold back residents from achieving their full potential. These are outlined in further detail in the linked [EBNS Evidence Base](#) and in the online [East Birmingham - North Solihull story map](#).

## I. Understanding EBNS today

The fundamental economic potential of the EBNS corridor is strong. EBNS sits between two nationally significant economic assets, the city centre in Birmingham and UK Central. In recent decades, they have between them driven a rapid increase in jobs reshaping of the local economy; between 2015 and 2022, of the 116,675 net jobs that were created across the West Midlands, 66,000 came from these two locations alone

This growth will be sustained and accelerated by HS2, with two new high-speed stations at either end of the corridor. But residents are benefitting too little from the economic growth within and around EBNS, with household incomes (Figure 6) and other outcomes worse than they should be for the area's proximity to economic centres.

Figure 6. Income per households before transfers, West Midlands and EBNS



*ONS Gross Disposal Household Income (GDHI) Lower-Level Data, 2023 Release. Primary GDHI only (excluding welfare, pensions etc). Rounded natural breaks.*

A series of challenges stand in the way of EBNS as a flourishing and vibrant place and economy and hold back residents from achieving their full potential. These are outlined in further detail in the linked EBNS evidence base and in the online story map. In summary:

- **Economic geography:** Too few of our residents in EBNS have good access and connectivity to current and emerging economic opportunities, or live in affordable, healthy and high-quality homes so that they can contribute to the future economy and wider prosperity. There are also a series of development sites that are underutilised and could be the source of growth, jobs and new businesses.

- **People and social capital:** Many of our residents are unable to take advantages of opportunities when they arise. They face barriers from an early age such child poverty, health challenges, low skill levels and aspirations, and weaker community and informal social networks that are essential routes into work and a flourishing life.
- **Place and environment:** Much of the natural, physical and built environment is poor quality. There is a lack of green space and poor air quality, creating adverse impacts for health and wellbeing, safety, and pride in place.

## II. Powers and levers available

Addressing barriers to inclusive growth and improving citizen outcomes have been long-standing strategic and policy priorities for BCC and SMBC. The EBNS concept builds on the long-standing work of both authorities through the development of a new integrated approach for the whole area to maximise the investment, connect residents to the opportunities and address the challenges. The coming together of two authorities with a shared voice to address these challenges and realise the opportunities, is a significant move and sets a positive framework to work with partners including the WMCA, government departments, NHS, universities, the voluntary, community and faith sector and investors.

The EBNS Strategy builds on and is intended to complement a strong existing baseline of work. This section sets out how we will look to build this, deploying existing tools in new ways, harness new tools and look to align activities with local, regional and national policy interventions, levers and funding streams.

### **Business rate retention: a new tool for EBNS**

A significant new tool available for use in EBNS is the ability to retain and reinvest business rate revenue from specific Growth Zone sites within East Birmingham and North Solihull. This was secured through the Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal. The Growth Zone sites - Bordesley Park, Tyseley, Washwood Heath/Saltley, BKQ, Arden Cross, and UK Central - consist of 381 hectares of developable land and represent a major opportunity to align investment, sectoral and industrial growth opportunities, use powers in new ways and achieve inclusive outcomes for residents at scale whilst delivering growth of regional and national significance. The sites are:

- UK Central, a prime inward investment location, home to the National Exhibition Centre and a major employment growth hub
- Arden Cross, a global destination for innovation, business, commerce and learning and site of the HS2 Interchange station.
- Land at Damson Parkway which includes the expansion of Land Rover Jaguar
- Tyseley, an energy innovation centre and is set to be home to the National Centre for the Decarbonisation of Heat.
- Bordesley Park, the site for a potential new football stadium and sports quarter.
- Washwood Heath/ Saltley, the location of the HS2 depot and control centre as well as a place for new employment uses.

Within the spatial limits of these sites, the two local authorities can retain 100% of the uplift in business rates across a 25-year period. As each of these sites is developed, they will create uplift in business rates income that can be used to support regeneration across the area. This stream of revenue, when the broader financial circumstances allow, could also be leveraged through borrowing to finance works needed to develop the sites and complimentary infrastructure. The first years of the programme do not require additional

borrowing and use of this facility, but it is a useful tool to accelerate and support the EBNS programme.

The business rates retention tool will complement other tools and funding via the devolution deal.

### **Alignment with local and regional growth opportunities**

The EBNS programme is well-placed to be a flagship programme in the West Midlands Growth Strategy and play a part in the government's growth and opportunity missions. The business rate retention powers can also align with other local economic growth programmes and assets including the Birmingham City Centre Enterprise Zone (EZ) and Birmingham Knowledge Quarter (BKQ) part of the West Midlands Investment Zone. The EZ and BKQ also enable business rate retention on key sites and are also key locations for economic growth with the BKQ within the EBNS area as is much of the Enterprise Zone which covers the HS2 Curzon Street station.

### **Deeper devolution: new funding and powers**

As well as the business rate retention powers on key sites, the devolution deal contains further powers and levers that can support the work in EBNS:

- **Integrated settlement:** With the right interventions and overall alignment with WMCA strategies and plans, EBNS can leverage in funding within the integrated settlement, which will bring together a range of funding streams to the WMCA and give more flexibility and certainty.
- **Local transport and rail:** WMCA has existing transport powers and new powers including over buses and a new rail partnership with Great British Railways. These complement existing transport planning and highways management responsibilities held by BCC and SMBC. The powers can be used to address the constraints arising from inadequate transport links within EBNS.
- **Housing:** The West Midlands strategic place partnership with Homes England commits to joint working to bring forward new housing supply, investment and regeneration, with WMCA setting the strategic direction of affordable housing funds.
- **Skills and employment:** The WMCA has expanded local control of adult skills provision, with funding streams such as the adult education budget commissioned by the WMCA and with local partners playing an increasingly large role as a convenor of FE and careers functions. These powers can support skills support within EBNS.

The government has committed to deepening the transfer of powers out of Whitehall. Negotiations could see devolution of employment support which would be of benefit to meeting EBNS objectives. The two authorities and partners in EBNS will also seek to work on improved public service delivery and work with relevant government departments on these approaches.

The local authorities also have their own levers that could assist the delivery of the long-term objectives alongside a wider set of opportunities to unlock and redirect funding to support inclusive growth in EBNS, including national funding and finance vehicles:

- **Planning:** The local plans of BCC and SMBC and the exercise of planning powers will be important to the delivery of the sites and to complimentary infrastructure and real estate projects. The government's National Planning Policy Framework is currently under consultation and will shape the planning environment too with a strategic approach to planning across the WMCA area. Alongside, both councils can seek to use powers available to achieve maximum inclusive growth impact.

- **Delivery vehicles:** Both councils and the WMCA have the ability to form a locally-led or a mayoral development corporation, reducing barriers to assembling and developing land, and bringing opportunities to create dedicated capacity, which will be explored.

**Funding and partnerships: There are existing programmes within EBNS including:**

- £37m from the Levelling Up Fund for Bordesley Park (£17m) and for the National Centre of the Decarbonisation of Heat at Tyseley (£20m), an Urban Green pathfinder partnership set up with National Trust to create a greener, healthier East Birmingham and a Strategic Alliance for Tyseley to support the green energy innovation district.
- The UK Central Infrastructure and Interchange investment programmes delivering projects across the north of Solihull funded primarily through the WMCA Investment Programme with additional funding from sources including the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Homes England, Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU) and the Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF).
- **Public procurement within EBNS:** Procurement typically comprises a third of public expenditure. This spending on externally provided goods and services can provide a powerful lever to impact the local economy and create positive social impact by spending on local businesses, securing local jobs and employment and driving good work standards. There is already action underway to harness procurement such as HS2 Ltd and NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS) and via the Birmingham Anchor Network.
- **Integrated care:** Since 2022, the NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS), comprising the Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care Partnership, has key powers to plan and fund health services in Birmingham and Solihull and to devise a health and care strategy for the area. In addition, the two local authorities are responsible for the commission of publicly funded social care. These responsibilities provide an important opportunity to support the reform of public services including cross-pillar integration and address multiple and complex needs with the EBNS area.
- **The National Wealth Fund:** This government fund will align two important sources of equity and debt finance, the British Business Bank and UK Infrastructure Bank, and will leverage in investment in new and growing industries, decarbonisation and clean energy. There is potential application for the National Wealth Fund in the EBNS area such as at the energy innovation area at Tyseley.
- **Local economies:** Both local authorities are developing economic approaches that can be deployed in the EBNS area with Solihull is collaborating with partners for policy development in inclusive economic growth, and Birmingham partnering on a review of community wealth building potential.

While the new tools and existing activities can be deployed and will bring benefits to EBNS, the level of funding is still nevertheless not commensurate with the scale of transformation needed. The authorities will make the case for additional funding and for further application

of further devolution, powers and investment with EBNS being a location for government, WMCA and other partners to prioritise investment and trial new powers and ways of working.

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### III. Delivering long-term change in EBNS

The purpose of this Vision is to set out how we can tackle the barriers above using powers and funding in new ways, to deliver long term inclusive economic growth across EBNS. The scale of opportunity in this area and the level of ambition to deliver a programme of investment and regeneration to improve social and economic outcomes is significant.

We recognise that resources and capacity are limited and investment in EBNS needs to be balanced alongside other areas across Birmingham and Solihull. Rather than dictating how one specific funding pot will be deployed, this document sets out a holistic set of objectives which should inform delivery. By focusing limited resources consistently on shared, evidence-based priorities (Figure 7), we have the potential to deliver substantial positive change.

The objectives will be further developed through these process steps:

- Establishment of related objectives for Birmingham and Solihull, each with a baseline and progress measurements
- Integration of measure to support the building of an inclusive economy
- Integration of integrated settlement outcome measures
- Measures of community benefit and satisfaction levels





An EBNS Joint Evaluation Plan will be developed to enable continuous reporting, evaluation and improvement.



The priorities and outcomes will sought to be met through the funding opportunities such as the Growth Zone retained business rates as in the previous section, but also other funding and investment able to be secured ahead through the public and private sector sources.



## Appendix 1 – East Birmingham North Solihull Strategy

Figure 7. Long term objectives and investment priorities for EBNS

Barriers	Long-term vision and objectives	Long-term investment priorities
<b>Economic Geography</b>  Too few of our residents in EBNS have good access and connectivity to current and emerging economic opportunities, or live in affordable, healthy and high-quality homes that enable them to contribute to the future economy and wider prosperity.	 <b>Improved transport and digital connectivity</b> which strategically links residents to <b>key employment opportunities</b> , essential services, and stimulate the growth of successful businesses.   <b>High quality housing across a range of tenures and typologies</b> , providing good value to residents and well located with access to employment and wider opportunities.	Support the delivery of core sites to increase jobs accessible within the local area, <b>delivering uplift in business rates that can be retained and reinvested in line with long-term investment priorities.</b>
		Invest in transport corridors, <b>prioritising those interventions that connect under-served EBNS residents with current and emerging centres of economic opportunity.</b>
		Enable new housing projects, <b>prioritising interventions that increase the share of homes with strong transport accessibility</b> to economic opportunity.
<b>Barriers to People and Social Capital</b>  Many of our residents are unable to take advantages of opportunities when they arise. They face barriers from an early age such child poverty, health challenges, low skill levels and aspirations, and weaker community and informal	 Increased <b>healthy life expectancy and better health at all life stages</b> , particularly in early years, with more years spent in good health for all our residents, and fewer deaths due to preventable causes.   <b>Raising innovation, productivity and entrepreneurship to provide new employment</b>	Support steps towards public service reform, <b>prioritising projects that support cross-pillar integration of service areas addressing multiple and complex needs.</b>
		Invest in early years and young-people centred interventions, <b>prioritising activities that will multiply the impact of existing activities and workstreams with long-term pay-offs for EBNS residents.</b>
		Co-ordinate the alignment of anchor organisation and partner activities, spend and impact within EBNS, <b>prioritising activities that improve socio-economic outcomes for EBNS residents</b> and retain opportunities within the local community.

social networks that are essential routes into work and a flourishing life.	<b>opportunities</b> (in or near area) and an education/skills system that supports residents to access high-quality jobs, with integrated public services delivering better local outcomes.	Support programmes to embed the benefits of local growth within communities, <b>prioritising programmes with potential to multiply impact and retain wealth within EBNS communities.</b>
<b>Environment and Place</b>  Much of the natural, physical and built environment is poor quality. There is a lack of green space and poor air quality, creating adverse impacts for health and wellbeing, safety, and pride in place.	 <b>Safe, affordable and accessible high-quality neighbourhoods</b> will provide residents with attractive and liveable spaces that will increase quality of life and satisfaction   <b>Sustainable solutions, increasing biodiversity, improving air quality,</b> and reducing carbon emissions whilst advancing innovative solutions to retro fit existing building stock.	Support reinvestment in hyperlocal transport, active travel and public realm, <b>prioritising those interventions with the opportunity to support modal shift and healthier activity.</b>
		Fund placemaking interventions, action plans and revenue funded programmes, <b>prioritising those that build out from local centres</b> first as focal points for improvements.
		Investment in the natural and built environment of EBNS, <b>prioritising opportunities to improve environmental, wellbeing and health outcomes for residents.</b>
		Support community, voluntary, faith and social enterprise led activity to support placemaking, <b>prioritising programmes that multiply impact of existing community activity and utilise existing assets.</b>

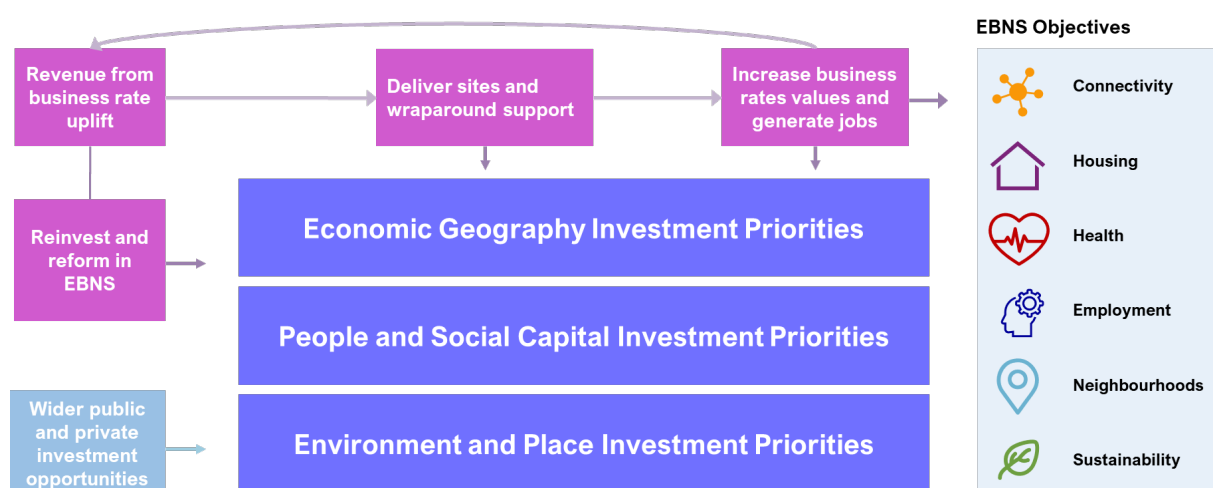
## Long term investment priorities in EBNS

### Tackling barriers and delivering growth – developing a theory of change for EBNS interventions

Sustained progress on the key outcomes and priorities will require a consistent and long-term approach to applying new investment integrating changes in public services, local collaborative innovation through the set of priorities listed above. They are intended to provide a flexible framework to prioritise local funding decisions and advocacy over the lifespan of the Strategy. It is also based on the rationale that consistent small changes over the long term in the right direction can have a significant impact on outcomes.

We are developing a theory of change (summarised in Figure 8) to demonstrate how the overarching mission and desired outcomes can be delivered over time, with a clear basis in the evidence and an assessment of the opportunities, tools and resources available. The aim is for all investment decisions to be made with a clear view on return on investment (annex 1) that will be developed in each authority's delivery plan.

**Figure 8. Aligning existing and new investment with the developing EBNS Theory of Change**



## **Appendix 1 – East Birmingham North Solihull Strategy**

## IV. Taking forward the EBNS strategy

This strategy is an active framework setting out long-term objectives for investment in EBNS. To deliver the range of programmes and investments needed in support of the developing theory of change will require a strategic approach to governance and delivery, including focussed additional delivery capacity.

This approach is informed by the positive inheritance from the East Birmingham Board and Solihull Urban Growth Company which have both helped drive forward development across EBNS.

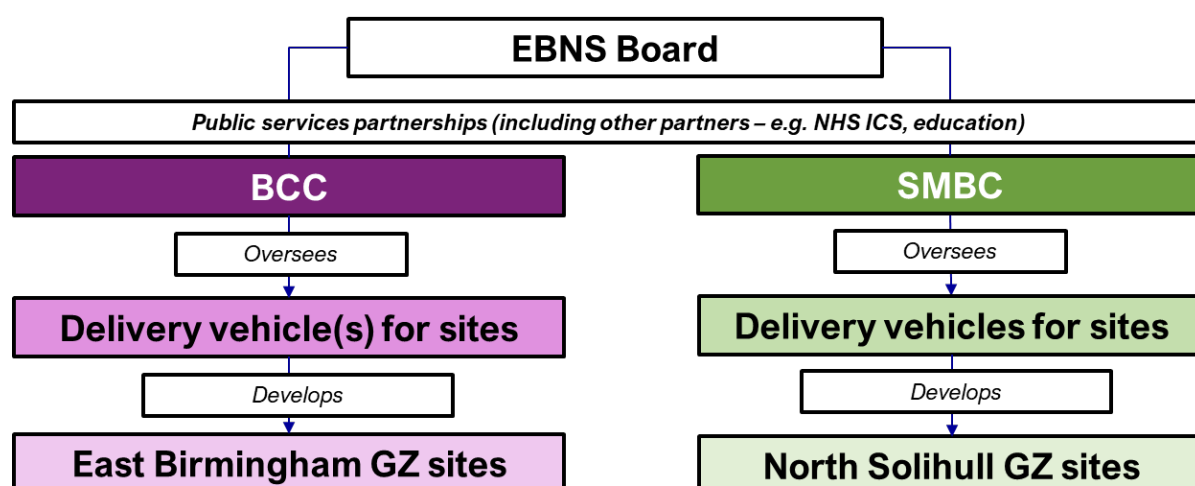
### Governance approach and structure

Co-ordinated long-term delivery across EBNS requires governance structures that are flexible and adaptable as projects and programmes mature and as revenues and funding come on stream. The governance proposed would build on existing capacity and established delivery models, focusing on strengthening capacity where it does not yet exist. New bodies would be created only when needed to realise potential of the area.

Meeting the opportunity will require partnership working across the two local authorities and the WMCA. Key features of the new governance could include:

- A high-level oversight board co-led by the two councils to set direction, bring partners and investors together and ensure that we stay aligned to our shared objectives. It could draw in partners from the IZ and EZ and other key delivery partners and service providers as appropriate such as the WMCA and government including Department for Work and Pensions.
- Separate support and decision-making structures for BCC and SMBC recognising the different maturity and requirements of sites, and which may evolve over the period of this strategy.
- Partnership working, co-development and agreement between all relevant local partners, including with WMCA, will be fundamental to the success of the EBNS.

Figure 9. Proposed EBNS Governance Structure



Delivery of this strategy is not solely down to public bodies. Strong, empowered communities are best placed to lead change. We will seek to build partnerships with residents and community organisations through genuine and meaningful engagement and collaboration. This includes in BCC's case meeting the aims of Shaping Birmingham's Future Together.

It is crucial that all activity and funding must be democratically accountable at the local level and that BCC, SMBC and WMCA retain control over final policy spending decisions. We are committed to transparency, diversity and inclusion throughout our decision-making.

## V. Next steps and implementation

Following approval of the EBNS Strategy by the cabinets of BCC and SMBC, action is required on implementation. A phased approach to delivering the Investment Strategy would begin with:

### **1. Establishing governance structures.**

Develop and establish the governance recommendations to oversee the work of the EBNS programme and management arrangements covering programme and project management and financial management principles including the business rate uplift model.

### **2. Setting up the delivery capacity.**

Under the oversight of the new governance, partners will work together to establish delivery capacity, co-ordination structures and mechanisms for the EBNS-wide programme. This is a 25-year agenda, and more than one iteration is likely to be needed.

### **3. Finalising the theory of change and outcomes.**

Further refine and finalise the theory of change, finalise the outcomes to be met and the evidence base and develop a joint evaluation plan to enable continuous reporting, evaluation and improvement.

### **4. Establishing a pipeline of programmes including transport and housing with funding and financing, including links to the WMCA integrated settlement**

We will work with WMCA, Transport for West Midlands, and other relevant bodies such as Homes England to identify funding and financing requirements for specific priority investments including use of the funding tools such as the business rate retention, and to identify gaps for future project development against the long-term investment priorities that could be progressed with funding.

### **5. Local authority-specific design and delivery plan on both public service programmes and site and infrastructure delivery.**

Each of the two local authorities will support individual workstreams tailored to the specific geography, opportunities and scale of their respective areas, linked to their own delivery remits and powers. This will be set out in a delivery plan for each local authority area which will link with, and add specificity to, the EBNS theory of change and the outcomes/objectives, the updated evidence base and story map, and alongside the impacts and delivery principles which will help identify how to take forward priority investments, public service changes and local economic growth. It will also set out how engagement and collaboration with the community will take place.

### **6. Further feasibility work and delivery vehicles/arrangements created for relevant sites.**



As needed, we will work to scope, assess and identify appropriate delivery vehicles and arrangements for each of the major Growth Zone sites where these are not yet in place. This could include structures such as Mayoral or Locally Led Development Corporations, or other bespoke arrangements.

## VI. Annex I: Assessing Return on Investment

As the EBNS programme develops and we move closer to investment decisions, it is crucial to maintain a clear and consistent view of the benefits across interventions. Each potential strand of activity will be subject to a full assessment of the return on investment. This will help to ensure that any spend through the EBNS Programme – including the business rate retention mechanism – is additive and provides good value for money. All interventions will be aligned with the West Midlands Assurance Framework and existing council policies.

It is too early to assess the overall return on investment available at the programme-wide level. However, cost-benefit analysis will be an essential decision-making tool. All investment decisions and resource allocations, will be made and be informed by following the approach:

1. Aligning the key outcomes identified in the long-term objectives with locally measurable indicators (i.e. jobs created, housing units delivered, local area GVA estimates) along with locally relevant indicators to measure success.
2. Identifying the baseline trajectory of performance using small area data sets, assessing current performance to test what's working and evaluate if development or review are needed.
3. Using appropriate levels of assessment for each level of investment, ensuring that major investments and programmes are compliant with national standards of value for money and effectiveness.
4. Identifying the full costs of interventions, whether through determining the viability gap for sites via enabling and ground remediation works, infrastructure costs, or revenue programmes.
5. Identifying the benefits within the EBNS boundary of further action to taking a place-based approach to embed the benefits of growth in the local economy (i.e. through design principles and developer contributions, local supply chain procurement, linked employment programmes etc), and any costs of doing so on project and intervention viability.
6. Draw all of the above to provide an understanding of the benefits and costs of the options: doing nothing, of delivering interventions, and of delivering interventions with an embedded inclusive growth focus, to inform decision-making and funding allocation by Birmingham City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, and the West Midlands Combined Authority.



# **EAST BIRMINGHAM NORTH SOLIHULL Strategy**