

# Solihull Economic Strategy

A delivery plan for the first three years

# 2023-32



**Solihull**  
METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## Introduction

Our Economic Strategy sets out our vision and priorities for the next ten years. This Delivery Plan sets out the practical steps that we will be taking to achieve both.

This document provides a phased delivery plan for the Council and its partners to follow, with a focus on the first three years.

This Delivery Plan outlines:

- how we will deliver our Economic Strategy and the ways in which we will work with partners.
- the actions we will advance for each of the themes identified within our Economic Strategy.
- roles and responsibilities moving forward.

The actions within this Delivery Plan complement existing activity already taking place within the Borough; and they build on work being undertaken through other Strategies (including the Net Zero Action Plan, Solihull Connected, Local Plan and WMCA Plan for Growth). We have not sought to distil all of these actions into this Delivery Plan. Instead, our focus is on actions with a core economic development function.

## Delivery Plan Principles

Our Economic Strategy sets out bold ambitions linked to the quality and scale of economic growth over the next decade, and the wider outcomes that will be achieved through it. We will succeed only if there is collective action across Solihull, drawing on the capacity and expertise of partners across the public and private sectors, and from the people living within our communities.

As the responsible Authority, we will deliver this Economic Strategy using all the levers at our disposal. There are three main levers we have identified:

- **Influencing:** working alongside our partners to ensure that our ambitions are reflected in the investment made by the public and private sector in Solihull.
- **Catalysing:** encouraging and supporting investment into Solihull, by working alongside partners to support their activities.
- **Delivering/Financing Projects:** directly delivering and commissioning activity on the ground with our partners, particularly where there is a clear market failure argument for direct investment.

Within each of the themes, we have described how we are going to achieve the mission and priorities set out. In some areas, we are already delivering the change needed within our communities, and we will continue to do this. We have also developed a small number of high impact 'moonshot' projects; these are big interventions which are designed to unlock the full growth potential of UK Central. Finally, there are a range of supporting actions, that will ensure we work with all of our communities and businesses to achieve the economic goals we have set out.

## Theme A: A Vibrant Business Economy

We have developed a range of actions to *build our economic resilience and increase overall productivity by supporting business investment, innovation and growth in Solihull.*

### Existing Activity

#### We will continue to:

- work closely with our Planning team and land owners/developers to ensure that appropriate and sustainable commercial development is delivered, with a mix of different uses provided to meet the needs of SME businesses locally.
- Engage our local companies through a comprehensive business engagement programme, building relationships with our strategic stakeholders to our local SMEs and start up enterprises
- encourage more local businesses to take up business support programmes – like Made Smarter West Midlands and Help to Grow, alongside regional and locally developed programmes
- work with West Midlands Growth Company to develop a strong business tourism offer (of national significance), building on existing work undertaken by Visit Solihull.
- work with local business organisations (including Chamber, BID, FSB) to share intelligence on business performance and needs in Solihull.

### ‘Moonshot’ Projects

Action	<b>A1) Accelerate the growth of a dynamic innovation cluster founded on low carbon and advanced engineering and with a particular focus on all aspects of future mobility. This should connect with the wider West Midlands Innovation Accelerator venture with close links to the Connected Places Catapult, and situated at the core of the UK Central Hub.</b>
Priority Area	Support innovation within the Borough
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a low carbon and advanced engineering cluster of activity within UK Central, with a focus on the future of mobility and addressing some of the challenges associated with this. Bring together existing innovative-active businesses in Solihull and along the A45 corridor (Birmingham to Coventry) to share best practice and collaborate across the area.</li> <li>• Connect this cluster of activity into the wider West Midlands Innovation Accelerator venture, which aims to ‘accelerate the growth of regional clusters of excellence in HealthTech &amp; MedTech and CleanTech’ with a</li> </ul>

	<p>particularly focus on accelerating the region's engineering R&amp;D and innovation strengths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look to attract nationally significant assets within the low carbon, advanced manufacturing and future mobility sectors into the area, including building links with the Connected Places Catapult and the MTC.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solihull is home to major advanced engineering businesses in automotive and aerospace. JLR and Rolls Royce (Birmingham Business Park) are key players. Both appear to be embracing Net Zero in a meaningful way and using it to effect radical innovation (including in relation to electric vehicles, linking closely to one of the Grand Challenges from the Industrial Strategy White Paper).</li> <li>Although some businesses are managing the transition to Net Zero well, there is a need to spread best practice and ensure Solihull becomes recognised as an exemplar area in this regard.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Delivering/Financing Projects &amp; Influencing</b> - act as a partner to UK Central in bringing forward initiatives and provide resources where possible.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban Growth Company</li> <li>SMBC</li> <li>Arden Cross</li> <li>West Midlands Combined Authority</li> <li>Local/Regional Higher Education Institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Devolution Deal / West Midlands Innovation Accelerator</li> <li>Innovate UK/UKRI</li> <li>Private sector</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase inward investment spend into Solihull</li> <li>Increase the size of the low carbon and advanced engineering sectors</li> <li>Increase levels of innovation (e.g. patents/investment) in future mobility</li> <li>Increase presence of nationally-significant institutions within the low carbon and advanced engineering sectors in Solihull</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>A2) Secure the Levelling Up Zone status for Arden Cross and UK Central Hub, to support infrastructure funding</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Deliver the infrastructure needed to unlock our key employment sites
<b>Description</b>	Secure the funding needed to deliver the enabling infrastructure required for the UK Central Hub to be a success and working with the Hub's existing businesses to

	identify priorities on innovation, skills and commercial floorspace.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	Advance UK Central Hub as an exemplary development (Theme D)
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solihull has substantial locational advantages, and plans for the HS2 interchange station will improve its national and international connectivity further.</li> <li>• However, connectivity between some parts of the Borough is a challenge, with a need to support the accessibility of new employment opportunities for those in more deprived parts of the Borough.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Delivering/Financing Action:</b> Work with Arden Cross and others to develop proposals for a Tax Increment Financing initiative; and then work with partners to secure appropriate support
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC</li> <li>• Urban Growth Company</li> <li>• HM Government</li> <li>• Arden Cross Ltd</li> <li>• NEC</li> <li>• Birmingham Airport</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once in place, this ought to be self-financing, but developmental monies will need to be secured to create the scheme</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New infrastructure delivery in the UK Central Hub, linking it to all parts of the Borough.</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>A3) Deliver new research and innovation investment into Arden Cross around growth sectors.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the growth of a 'new economy'</li> <li>• Support the growth of small businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the University of Warwick and partners to develop a major new facility to be based at the UK Central Hub</li> <li>• Work to attract new innovation and research centre partners to the Arden Cross site, particularly around Solihull's key growth sectors</li> <li>• Ensure that this new investment maximises its impact on the local residential and business communities, with outreach and knowledge transfer embedded into the proposals.</li> <li>• Understand spatial and locational requirements of potential partners and ensure this is reflected in emerging proposals for the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	Advance UK Central Hub as an exemplary development (Theme D)

<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a need/opportunity for a regional facility of this nature within the West Midlands given the scale of assets</li> <li>• Arden Cross is of national significance (in terms of scale and access). Plans for Arden Cross include development of an innovation hub with a focus on growth sectors, potentially creating major opportunities for Solihull if this ambition can be realised.</li> <li>• There is currently a relatively small higher education institution presence in the Borough and an opportunity to attract major research institutions into Solihull with the scale of development and connectivity proposed at Arden Cross.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Catalyst</b> – bring together partners, including Arden Cross and major higher education / research institutions to understand the potential of the scheme.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS Trusts</li> <li>• Urban Growth Company</li> <li>• Arden Cross Ltd</li> <li>• SMBC</li> <li>• West Midlands Combined Authority</li> <li>• University of Warwick</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKRI</li> <li>• Innovate UK</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased higher education presence in Solihull</li> <li>• Innovation and investment in identified growth sectors</li> </ul>

## Borough-Wide Initiatives

Borough-wide initiatives that we have developed to *build our economic resilience and increase overall productivity by supporting business investment, innovation and growth in Solihull* are

- Work with major employers to encourage open innovation, building on JLR's Plug and Play UK partnership with BT/University of Warwick and securing local benefits
- Broker relationships between the larger and smaller businesses in the Borough, developing a business mentorship programme to support smaller businesses
- Promote existing knowledge transfer programmes in the West Midlands to Solihull's businesses including Knowledge Transfer programmes and BSEEN initiative
- Launch competitions / programmes for businesses to design innovative practices for public sector organisations to improve public sector productivity / practices (something that is already well-established in the health sector).



- Develop a Workspace strategy and an affordable workspace policy to ensure the delivery of affordable workspace within new developments
- Look at possibility of bidding for Cultural Action Zone status for Solihull town centre, developing a range of actions to embed culture into the town centre
- Deliver the actions set out in the Solihull Cultural and Creative Economy report
- Work to develop a rounded business support offer through UKSPF funding – including signposting to workspace, business support and finance
- Develop a distinctive brand/identity for Solihull’s innovation landscape and connectivity, which will highlight and promote Solihull’s competitive advantages, including future opportunities around HS2 connectivity.

<b>Action</b>	<b>A4) Work with major employers to encourage open innovation, building on JLR’s Plug and Play UK partnership with BT/University of Warwick and securing local benefits</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support innovation within the Borough</li> <li>• Support the growth of small businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work alongside Solihull’s major employers to encourage more innovative practices across Solihull’s businesses. Encourage the spread of knowledge between our largest and smallest businesses, building on existing programmes that already exist (including JLR’s Plug and Play UK partnership with BT/University of Warwick).</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to support infrastructure to support innovation diffusion in Solihull</li> <li>• Opportunities to develop through working with anchor institutions such as JLR and Rolls Royce</li> <li>• There is limited knowledge sharing across different businesses in Solihull – many act in isolation from others, limiting opportunities for the spreading of ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC’s Role</b>	<b>Catalyst</b> – work with our largest businesses to explore new approaches/build on existing approaches to sharing knowledge and research with each other.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC</li> <li>• Major Employers in Solihull</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKRI</li> <li>• Innovate UK</li> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased collaboration between businesses in Solihull</li> <li>• Increased innovation activity</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>A5) Broker relationships between the larger and smaller businesses in the Borough, developing a business mentorship programme to support smaller businesses</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support innovation within the Borough</li> <li>• Support the growth of small businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a business mentorship programme which brings together larger and smaller businesses to share best practice, insights and knowledge.</li> <li>• Look to partner together businesses from similar sectors, or with similar backgrounds to ensure there are opportunities for learning from each other.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solihull has a wealth of large businesses located in the Borough, many of which have an international profile. However, a number of these businesses act in isolation from each other – with limited connections with other businesses in Solihull.</li> <li>• There is a need to improve knowledge sharing across different businesses in Solihull helping to spread new ideas and practices.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Delivering/Financing Project</b> – develop a scheme which brings together larger and smaller businesses, building on the Council's existing business relationships and knowledge from other business representative organisations.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Businesses within Solihull</li> <li>• Business Representative Organisations (e.g. FSB, Chamber)</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC Finances</li> <li>• Sponsorship from larger businesses in Solihull</li> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased collaboration between businesses in Solihull</li> <li>• Increased innovation activity</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>A6) Promote existing knowledge transfer programmes in the West Midlands to Solihull's businesses including Knowledge Transfer programmes and BSEEN initiative</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support innovation within the Borough</li> <li>• Invest in and align workforce skills with the changing needs of employers</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better promote existing knowledge transfer programmes to businesses within the Solihull and encourage more businesses to engage with West Midlands-based universities (through existing programmes).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run a promotion campaign on these activities, targeting businesses with growth potential and who might have an interest in these activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure local people have the skills to benefit from emerging opportunities and define appropriate pathways to help secure them (Theme B)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solihull has a wealth of large businesses located in the Borough, many of which have an international profile. There are opportunities to increase linkages working with each other and local supply chains</li> <li>Anecdotal evidence suggests that Solihull's businesses are unaware of knowledge transfer programmes that existing in Solihull and across the West Midlands</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Catalyst</b> – develop a promotional programme to increase awareness of existing knowledge transfer programmes.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC</li> <li>West Midlands-based Universities</li> <li>Business Growth West Midlands/Growth Hub</li> <li>Business Representative Organisations (e.g. FSB, Chamber)</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC Finances</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased innovation activity</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>A7) Launch competitions / programmes for businesses to design innovative practices for public sector organisations to improve public sector productivity / practices.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Support innovation within the Borough
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage more public sector organisations to work collaboratively with the private sector to create innovative solutions for some of the problems faced within the public sector.</li> <li>Develop new competitions / programmes to encourage more collaboration across the sectors, in a similar vein to what has worked successfully in the health sector (e.g. <a href="#">University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust Research, Development and Innovation department</a>), which encourages collaboration between public and private sector organisations.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a more entrepreneurial economy, through skills provision and business support (Theme A)</li> <li>Support the growth of small businesses (Theme A)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is limited knowledge sharing across different businesses in Solihull and future opportunities for the spreading of ideas.</li> </ul>

<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Catalyst</b> – encourage public sector organisations (including SMBC) to launch competitions/programmes to increase innovative practices within the public sector.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Solihull-based businesses</li> <li>• Business Representative Organisations (e.g. FSB, Chamber)</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad-hoc depending on funding streams available, and type of project envisaged.</li> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased innovation activity in Solihull</li> <li>• More efficient public sector operation</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>A8) Develop a Workspace strategy for Solihull, including an affordable workspace policy to ensure the delivery of affordable workspace within new developments</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Deliver the right types of commercial space (particularly affordable and flexible workspace) to support sustained business growth
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a Workspace Strategy for Solihull that identifies the types of spaces needed in the Borough and the characteristics of key sites (e.g. Blythe Valley Business Park, Birmingham Business Park) - to deliver different price points and a range of offers (including co-working and lab space).</li> <li>• Develop an affordable workspace policy which seeks to ensure provision of affordable workspace within new developments to support smaller businesses in the Borough. This should look to ensure that a proportion of workspace is available to SMEs at an affordable rent and that the premises serve the expected needs of businesses.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	Work with partners to deliver plans for growth and expansion across the Borough (Theme D)
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial property data shows there is a relatively limited stock of commercial space for businesses looking to move into Solihull. This is particularly challenging for those looking for 'grow-on' space in the Borough, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that some businesses are having to leave Solihull to find adequate premises to expand.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Delivering/Financing Project</b> – develop a Workspace Strategy and affordable workspace policy
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Developers, land owners and potential workspace operators</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Representative Organisations (e.g. FSB, Chamber)</li> </ul>
Potential Sources of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC funded</li> <li>• Joint venture with market</li> </ul>
Desired Outcome / Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of more workspace aimed at SME businesses</li> </ul>

Action	<b>A9) Look at the possibility of building on the Cultural Action Zone work, to further imbed culture into the town centre and consider the possibility of delivering a Cultural Compact</b>
Priority Area	Support the growth of a 'new economy' which builds on emerging strengths in the digital and creative sectors
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop proposals to continue a Cultural Action Zone in Solihull town centre, bringing together key stakeholders to form a multi-agency partnership</li> <li>• The programme has ambitions to embed heritage and culture into -the town centre, with a variety of activities provided (including creating sustained cultural activity and experiences in retail spaces, putting on festivals, installing public art, and rebranding multi-use public realm spaces).</li> </ul>
Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the growth of small businesses (Theme A)</li> <li>• Create a compelling value proposition for Solihull, promoting the Borough to policy makers and potential inward investors (Theme A)</li> <li>• Deliver change within our town centres, making them more sustainable and attractive places (Theme D)</li> </ul>
Rationale / Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solihull's cultural offer lack profile, innovation and diversity, and there are some mixed perceptions of its quality.</li> <li>• The Borough has the potential to develop cultural infrastructure to support either a developed grassroots community offer or professional networks and support for cultural and creative industries.</li> <li>• Through already established town centre cultural infrastructure such as the Core Theatre complex, Summerfest and Jazz Festival there is an opportunity to grow the profile and scope of the cultural offer.</li> </ul>
SMBC's Role	<b>Delivering/Financing Project</b> – bring together partners to look at the continued support of the Cultural Action Zone and potential Cultural Compact.
Project Lead & Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Major cultural assets (e.g. Core Theatre, Solihull Festival and Jazz Festival)</li> <li>• The creative Sector including arts and culture organisation and free lancers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Organisations</li> </ul>
Potential Sources of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC to fund bid as required</li> <li>Arts Council England People and Places</li> <li>West Midlands Combined Authority</li> </ul>
Desired Outcome / Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced cultural and creative experiences in Solihull town centre, and wider recognition of our cultural offer</li> <li>Increased footfall in town centre</li> </ul>

Action	<b>A10) Develop actions to support the Cultural and Creative sectors and emerging Cultural Strategy for Solihull</b>
Priority Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the growth of a 'new economy' which builds on emerging strengths in the digital and creative sectors</li> </ul>
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop actions to support our ambitions to foster the growth of the cultural and creative economy in Solihull, aligned to the emerging Cultural Strategy</li> <li>To investigate opportunities such as an external funding strategy for the cultural and creative economy, enhancing networks of cultural and creative skills and enterprise hubs across the Borough, and enhancing Solihull's 'creative economy' inward investment offer.</li> <li>Investigate opportunities for working with neighbouring areas such as South Warwickshire to explore creative cluster development</li> <li>Develop support programmes that meet the needs of the creative and cultural sector</li> </ul>
Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a more entrepreneurial economy, through skills provision and business support (Theme A)</li> <li>Support the growth of small businesses (Theme A)</li> <li>Create a compelling value proposition for Solihull, promoting the Borough to policy makers and potential inward investors (Theme A)</li> </ul>
Rationale / Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solihull has a growing cultural and creative economy, but it faces considerable competition from more-established locations (e.g. Birmingham, Coventry and Leamington Spa).</li> <li>There are currently no Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations within the Borough, despite some major cultural assets being based in the area.</li> <li>The Borough lacks infrastructure to support either a developed grassroots cultural offer, and professional networks which support cultural and creative industries and freelancers.</li> </ul>
SMBC's Role	<b>Delivering/Financing Project</b> – Develop actions to support the Cultural and Creative sectors and emerging Cultural Strategy for Solihull
Project Lead & Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC (Lead)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major cultural assets (e.g. Core Theatre, Solihull Festival and Jazz Festival)</li> <li>• Creative businesses, freelancers, venues and investors</li> <li>• Neighbouring authorities (including South Warwickshire)</li> </ul>
Potential Sources of Funding	UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Desired Outcome / Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in the size of the cultural and creative economy in Solihull</li> <li>• Increased recognition for the creative sector</li> </ul>

Action	<b>A11) Work to develop a rounded business support offer through UK Shared Prosperity Funding - including signposting to workspace, business support and finance</b>
Priority Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a more entrepreneurial economy, through skills provision and business support</li> <li>• Support the productivity and growth of small businesses</li> </ul>
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use UK Shared Prosperity Funding to refresh and enhance the business support offer provided within Solihull, building on Solihull for Success.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to work with neighbouring areas to generate economies of scale in delivering business support, ensuring that support offered meets the needs of local businesses.</li> <li>• Commission business support programmes that support the activity within the Economic Strategy and identified sectors.</li> </ul>
Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the right types of commercial space (particularly affordable and flexible workspace) to support sustained business growth (Theme A)</li> </ul>
Rationale / Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solihull has lower business start-up rates relative to the rest of the West Midlands.</li> <li>• Anecdotal evidence suggests that take-up of business support within Solihull (especially regional support) is limited.</li> </ul>
SMBC's Role	<b>Delivering/Financing Project</b> –work with partners to identify and commission an appropriate business support package using UK Shared Prosperity Funding, including diagnostics, grants and specialised business support.
Project Lead & Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• West Midlands Combined Authority</li> <li>• Local Delivery Partners</li> </ul>
Potential Sources of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> <li>• LEP funding of Growth Hub in 2023</li> </ul>
Desired Outcome / Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced business support offering, leading to higher business start-up rate and business growth.</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>A12) Develop a distinctive brand/identity for Solihull's innovation landscape and connectivity, which will highlight and promote Solihull's competitive advantages, including future opportunities around HS2 connectivity.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a compelling value proposition for Solihull, promoting the Borough to policy makers and potential inward investors</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to develop a distinctive brand/identity for Solihull, highlighting its existing strengths in innovation and research, and raising awareness of future opportunities and developments that are coming to Solihull (e.g. Arden Cross, HS2).</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support innovation within the Borough (Theme A)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solihull has a strong innovation offer, which is set to grow in the future with upcoming investment, however this offer should be better articulated to potential investors and policy makers.</li> <li>• Many of Solihull's largest businesses act in isolation from others, and there is opportunity to develop a strong growth/innovation narrative that can be told about Solihull.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Influencing</b> – working alongside partners to develop a strong narrative for Solihull and sharing this with potential investors/policy makers.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Midlands Growth Company</li> <li>• SMBC</li> <li>• UK Central</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsorship from local businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased inward investment into Solihull</li> </ul>



## Theme B: Great Opportunities for Everyone

We have developed a range of actions to *ensure that people and communities across Solihull have access to good work and opportunities to develop their skills in line with employer demand.*

### Existing Activity

#### We will continue to:

- Deliver the Solihull Careers Hub, and employer engagement activity linked to this, including Enterprise Advisors and Cornerstone Employers
- Support the system leadership role of the Employment and Skills Board
- Support the reduction of youth unemployment through a range of partnerships and projects, with a focus on those who are furthest from the labour market
- Support our residents to move into employment, or upskill through training and education
- Support local people to overcome their barriers to employment

### ‘Moonshot’ Project

<b>Action</b>	<b>B1) Deliver a workforce masterplan to ensure that all of Solihull’s residents are able to access the opportunities being developed at the UK Central Hub.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of and improve access to new and existing opportunities being developed within Solihull, particularly around the UK Central Hub</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a workforce masterplan which provides a clear picture of the expected employer-led demand for skills in Arden Cross and approaches to meeting this demand with support from local providers, employers and partners.</li> <li>• Ensure that the masterplan maximises opportunities for residents from more deprived communities and those currently facing health challenges.</li> <li>• Ensure that new employers moving to the Borough are fully aware of existing skills provision and are encouraged to support initiatives that enhance the skills of local people.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure local people have the skills to benefit from emerging opportunities and define appropriate pathways to help secure them (Theme A)</li> <li>• Develop a more entrepreneurial economy, through skills provision and business support (Theme A)</li> </ul>

<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arden Cross is a major development opportunity for Solihull, with the potential for up to 27,000 new jobs set to be unlocked.</li> <li>• Some parts of the borough – particularly North Solihull – are characterised by acute socio-economic exclusion and disadvantage. There are inter-generational challenges facing these parts of the Borough, with high levels of deprivation.</li> <li>• The gap between residents in North and South Solihull has widened over the last five years, with deprivation indicators suggesting that North Solihull is not improving in line with the rest of the Borough.</li> <li>• 11.% of 18–24-year-olds in North Solihull were claiming unemployment benefits in March 2023 – far above the national average of 5%.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Delivering/Financing Project</b> – work with partners to deliver a workforce masterplan for Arden Cross</li> </ul>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Local Further and Higher Education Providers</li> <li>• Arden Cross and potential employers</li> <li>• The NEC</li> <li>• Birmingham Airport</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC</li> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Funds</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved skill levels</li> <li>• Reduced (youth) unemployment in our most deprived communities</li> </ul>

## Borough-Wide Initiatives

Borough-wide initiatives that we have developed to *(re)generate distinctive and economically vibrant places across our Borough* are:

- Better understand the reasons why people are economically inactive in the workforce and design measures to encourage them back to work.
- Bring more of Solihull's economically inactive workforce back into work through improved skills and better job design/ flexible employment opportunities focused on those who are currently inactive.
- Work with employers to develop their Workforce Development Plans, identifying the skills they require in their workforce.
- Broker relationships between businesses, training providers and funders to deliver programmes that respond to the main skills needs of local businesses.
- Support employers in reaching out to schools and colleges, in order to increase the number of employer encounters for young people.

- Help to shape social value contribution generated through the Council's investment to deliver the priorities identified in this Economic Strategy.
- Ensure (as the LPA) that employment and skills strategies are developed (and resourced) as part of major planning applications, including those linked to UKC, NEC, Airport, etc.

<b>Action</b>	<b>B2) Better understand the make-up of Solihull's inactive workforce and design measures to encourage them back to work.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Ensure local people have the skills to benefit from emerging opportunities and define appropriate pathways to help secure them
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake research with local partners to better understand the current make-up of Solihull's inactive workforce, and understand reasons why they are inactive, and if there are measures available to support them back into employment.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a more entrepreneurial economy, through skills provision and business support (Theme A)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solihull has a very tight labour market, with low levels of unemployment (across the Borough as a whole) and a high employment rate (relative to the West Midlands)<sup>1</sup>. This creates challenges locally for businesses looking to recruit and expand, as there are relatively few people available for work.</li> <li>• Despite Solihull having a high proportion of its working-age population being economically active (81% in 2022<sup>2</sup>), there remains a number of people out of the workforce, that could be supported / encouraged to return to work, to fill some of the jobs being created across the Borough.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Delivering/Financing Projects</b> – fund and support the development of new research into Solihull's inactive workforce.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• City-REDI</li> <li>• Other Research Institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC funding</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of actions which can support economically inactive people back into employment.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The Solihull Economy 2021, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 2021

<sup>2</sup> Annual Population Survey, ONS, 2022

<b>Action</b>	<b>B3) Bring more of Solihull’s economically inactive residents back into work through improved skills and better job design/ flexible employment opportunities focused on those who are currently inactive.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Increase awareness of and improve access to new and existing opportunities being developed within Solihull
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the main barriers for economically inactive people getting back into the workforce.</li> <li>Work with employers in Solihull to create more flexible work opportunities for local people, encouraging more people who are currently economically inactive to find jobs that can be designed around their personal circumstances and that are sustainable for both the employer and employee.</li> <li>Promote the benefits associated with more flexible working patterns and job role design to Solihull’s businesses, and how these can be accommodated within the wider workforce.</li> <li>Support local employers to become ‘Disability Confident’</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in and align workforce skills with the changing needs of employers (Theme A)</li> <li>Increase awareness of and improve access to new and existing opportunities being developed within Solihull (Theme B)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See previous action (<i>Better understand the make-up of Solihull’s inactive workforce and design measures to encourage them back to work</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC’s Role</b>	<b>Catalysing</b> – promote the benefits of more flexible working patterns and job role design to local employers through events and promotional campaigns, and work with employers to understand current workforce needs.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>Business Representative Organisations (e.g. FSB, Chamber)</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC Funding</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More flexible opportunities created for local people</li> <li>Reduction in economic inactivity in Solihull</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>B4) Work with employers to develop their Workforce Development Plans, identifying the skills they require in their workforce.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Help businesses build stronger relationships with their local communities and invest in them as their future workforce
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will encourage more businesses to develop Joint Workforce Development Plans for their organisations</li> </ul>

	that directly link their needs with employment and skills programmes delivered to the local community, facilitating joint planning and helping them and the wider employment and skills system to anticipate, analyse and plan for the future requirements of their workforce. We will work with partners, including local business representative organisations, schools, colleges, DWP and WMCA, to increase awareness of Workforce Development Plans, and provide support to organisations looking to develop them.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in and align workforce skills with the changing needs of employers (Theme A)</li> <li>Deliver skills to support the growth of the low carbon sector (Theme C)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are several recognised skills gaps within the Borough, particularly in the digital, low carbon and advanced manufacturing / engineering sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Catalysing</b> – work alongside local employers to support them in developing Joint Workforce Development Plans
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>Local Employers</li> <li>Business Representative Organisations (e.g. FSB, Chamber)</li> <li>Local education and training institutions</li> <li>DWP</li> <li>WMCA</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Devolved Adult Education Budget</li> <li>Careers and Enterprise Company</li> <li>DWP Flexible Support Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased understanding of future skills demands amongst local employers</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>B5) Provide local system leadership to broker relationships between businesses, training providers and funders to deliver programmes that respond to the main skills needs of our local businesses.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Help businesses build stronger relationships with their local communities
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on SMBC's existing relationships with businesses, training providers and funders to co-ordinate the delivery of skills programmes which match the skills needs of local businesses.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in and align workforce skills with the changing needs of employers (Theme A)</li> <li>Deliver skills to support the growth of the low carbon sector (Theme C)</li> </ul>

<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anecdotal evidence suggests that the largest businesses in the Borough have good relationships with local providers, but small- and medium-sized businesses do not have such strong relationships with our educational providers.</li> <li>• The employment rate in Solihull increases significantly from 72% among those with an NVQ Level 2 qualification to 84% for those with a NVQ Level 3.<sup>3</sup> Supporting the number of people gaining higher-level qualifications will get more people into higher-value jobs, improving their incomes and quality of life.</li> <li>• These connections can help all parts of the community including older workers</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Catalysing</b> –bring together employers to understand the current skills needs, and work with training providers and funders to deliver these.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Local Employers</li> <li>• Business Representative Organisations (e.g. FSB, Chamber)</li> <li>• Local education institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devolved Adult Education Budget</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of new courses, or amendments to existing courses to match the needs of local employers</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>B6) Support employers in reaching out to schools and colleges, in order to increase the number of employer encounters for young people.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Help businesses build stronger relationships with their local communities
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with employers to deliver more meaningful employer encounters in local schools and colleges, helping to increase awareness of the opportunities and career pathways available locally.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in and align workforce skills with the changing needs of employers (Theme A)</li> <li>• Deliver skills to support the growth of the low carbon sector (Theme C)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are challenges for young people from some of our most deprived areas in getting access to employment opportunities. The claimant unemployment is five times higher in North Solihull than across the rest of the borough (8.1% compared to 1.6%)<sup>4</sup>.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Employment & Skills in Solihull, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 2021

<sup>4</sup> Understanding Inequalities in Solihull, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with qualifications and work experience are far more likely to be employed. The employment rate for those with no qualification in Solihull is 28%, compared to 74% for those with an NVQ Level 1 qualification.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Catalysing</b> –connecting Solihull's businesses with local schools and colleges to encourage more engagement.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Local Employers</li> <li>• Business Representative Organisations (e.g. FSB, Chamber)</li> <li>• Local education institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	Careers and Enterprise Company
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in number of Employer Encounters within local schools and colleges</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>B7) Help to shape social value contribution generated through the Council's investment to deliver on the priorities identified in this Economic Strategy</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Ensure the Council's activities maximise social returns for local communities
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the Council's current Social Value Policy (dated December 2021), the Council is looking to formally embed Social Value into all procurement processes followed by the Council to ensure it uses its role as a procurer to deliver inclusive growth in line with the priorities in the Council Plan.</li> <li>• This should be continued, with the Council helping to shape social value contributions to make sure that they deliver on the priorities identified within this Economic Strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better promote low carbon alternatives to local residents and businesses, linked to Social Value (Theme C)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council is a substantial investor in the Borough of Solihull, with multiple organisations delivering Social Value outcomes as part of their contracts within the Council. The Council should seek to shape the activities being undertaken (as part of Social Value delivery), ensuring that this delivers the priorities set out in this Economic Strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Catalysing</b> – work alongside the Council's contractors to ensure that the social value being delivered aligns with the priorities of this Economic Strategy.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> Employment & Skills in Solihull, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses procured by SMBC</li> </ul>
Potential Sources of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
Desired Outcome / Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More targeted social value outcomes in line with the priorities identified in this Economic Strategy</li> </ul>

Action	<b>B8) Ensure (as the LPA) that employment and skills strategies are developed (and resourced) as part of major planning applications, including those linked to UKC, NEC, Airport, etc.</b>
Priority Area	Help businesses build stronger relationships with their local communities
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with major developers to ensure that employment and skills strategies are developed (and resourced) that respond to the local skills ecosystem and maximise opportunities for people in our local communities (particularly our more deprived communities).</li> <li>• Develop relationships with potential developers at an early stage to ensure they consider this as part of their development proposals, and share best practice and the needs of local communities, to ensure this is reflected in employment and skills strategies that are developed.</li> </ul>
Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in and align workforce skills with the changing needs of employers (Theme A)</li> <li>• Deliver skills to support the growth of the low carbon sector (Theme C)</li> </ul>
Rationale / Evidence of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major development is expected in Solihull over the next decade, with substantial masterplans for the NEC, Arden Cross and Birmingham Airport. It is important that all of these developments consider how they will deliver employment locally and support the development of skills in Solihull.</li> <li>• There are skills and employment challenges facing some of our most deprived communities, with the claimant count rate in North Solihull is nearly 5 times higher than the rest of the borough<sup>6</sup>.</li> </ul>
SMBC's Role	<b>Catalysing</b> –work with major developers to ensure that employment and skills strategies are developed and reflect the needs of Solihull
Project Lead & Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major developers (Lead)</li> <li>• SMBC</li> </ul>
Potential Sources of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> The Story of Solihull 2020, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 2020



**Desired Outcome /  
Impacts**

- More apprenticeships offered in Solihull
- Reduced unemployment
- More jobs are created

## Theme C: A Sustainable Economy

We have developed a range of actions to *support our businesses to accelerate a collective transition to Net Zero*. This includes:

### Existing Activity

#### We will continue to

- develop and deliver the Net Zero Action Plan, and actions associated with this.
- develop and support the Solihull Town Centre Energy Network to provide a range of renewable and low carbon energy solutions
- work with central government funded schemes to deliver retrofit works to homes in Solihull
- deliver on recommendations made in the Council's Electric Vehicle Strategy (Going Electric) and associated action plan
- support the Solihull Sustainability Visioning Group, that currently has a membership of 75 businesses across the Borough
- deliver and expand Solihull Town Centre's Energy Network supporting the transition to a low carbon economy and net zero economic growth

### 'Moonshot' Projects

<b>Action</b>	<b>C1) Develop a public-private partnership on low carbon energy infrastructure in UK Central and across the Borough (including renewables and alternative fuels)</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Support the development of low carbon energy infrastructure to meet the needs of existing and new developments in the Borough
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a prospectus of low carbon energy infrastructure outcomes that SMBC would like to achieve to support the NZAP.</li> <li>• From this process SMBC can select a private sector partner/s to work in partnership with to achieve the borough's low carbon energy goals. This work can build on the experience of the Solihull Town Centre Energy Network development and implementation and support the need for further energy capacity at UK Central.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	Emissions from residential, commercial and industrial buildings make up 56% of Solihull's carbon emissions. The ability for homes and businesses to connect to localised low energy networks will support the decarbonisation of the Borough.
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Influence/ catalyse</b>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban Growth Company</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Central</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector investment</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in carbon emissions from SMBC homes and businesses</li> </ul>

## Borough-Wide Initiatives

Borough-wide initiatives that we have developed to *(re)generate distinctive and economically vibrant places across our Borough* are:

- Incentivise local businesses/landlords looking to retrofit smaller commercial premises
- Strengthen the Solihull Sustainability Visioning Group (SSVG) to support the Borough's net zero transition.
- Ensure continued business support to medium and SME businesses in Solihull to enable a transition to a net zero future
- Undertake long term market engagement and readiness activities with local suppliers that are in, or could move into, the retrofit market to engage them in upcoming regional/government led funding opportunities.
- Explore the potential of different funding models (both public and private) to achieve SMBC's retrofit aims across its public and private housing stock.
- Engage with developers who wish to work in the SMBC area in the next 10 years to share the low carbon ambition of the Council, as reflected in the Draft Local Plan.
- Research the biodiversity opportunities on the sites of Solihull's large businesses
- Undertake promotional activity to ensure that businesses have the knowledge and experience to make their assets/buildings resilient to the changing climate, drawing on best practice being developed regionally and nationally.
- Take part in the WMCA industrial symbiosis programme, which aims to unlock investment, innovation and circularity in strategic regional locations.

<b>Action</b>	<b>C2) Incentivise local businesses/landlords looking to retrofit smaller commercial premises</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Support retrofit in existing residential and commercial buildings and sustainable construction in new developments
<b>Description</b>	Explore and deliver a financial mechanism (e.g. business rates relief, loan scheme) that allows for an acceleration of energy efficiency retrofit in smaller commercial premises.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A

<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	Emissions from commercial and industrial buildings make up 14% of Solihull's carbon emissions. Many SMBC businesses work out of rented properties and as such have limited influence on the energy efficiency of the buildings.
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Delivering/Financing Project</b> – identify a potential funding source for delivering this project, and work with partners and developers to set out scheme criteria.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMCA (Lead)</li> <li>• Energy Capital</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business rates support</li> <li>• Devolution Deal</li> <li>• Loan scheme</li> <li>• Direct approach to Treasury</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in carbon emissions from SMBC businesses</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>C3) Strengthen the Solihull Sustainability Visioning Group (SSVG) to support the Borough's net zero transition.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Support Solihull's businesses to decarbonise their activities
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the capacity of the SSVG to engage businesses in more focussed knowledge share and peer to peer learning on net zero activity, particularly between larger businesses and medium/SME businesses.</li> <li>• This includes further actions in this plan (last three here – on biodiversity, climate resilience and circular economy). Larger business should be encouraged to support their medium and SME supply chain businesses on their net zero journey if they are not doing so already.</li> <li>• Encourage businesses to sign up to the West Midlands Net Zero Business Pledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<p>As part of the evidence base for this strategy/action plan, a desktop survey of the net zero profile of businesses in the SMBC area with 250+ employees was undertaken. Of the 22 businesses that fell into this category, 17 have set explicit net zero targets for their businesses, with nine having net zero or carbon management plans to support the achievement of those targets, with another four committed to producing a plan. A further three had detailed net zero actions in their sustainability or annual report. This local knowledge can be leveraged in the net zero transition for the rest of the Borough.</p> <p>The SSVG currently has a membership of 75 businesses that meet quarterly. Other Borough's don't have this resource to call on.</p>

<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Influence</b>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	SMBC
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refocussing of existing SMBC internal resource</li> <li>• Corporate sponsorship from SSVc members</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in carbon emissions from SMBC businesses</li> <li>• SMBC businesses are more confident in their net zero goods and services, differentiating them in their respective markets</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>C4) Ensure continued business support to medium and SME businesses in Solihull to enable a transition to a net zero future</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Support Solihull's businesses to decarbonise their activities
<b>Description</b>	Maintain and grow the support currently offered via the Clean Growth Programme.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the growth of small businesses (Theme A)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are opportunities to develop knowledge on how medium and SME businesses are transitioning to net zero in the SMBC area. A national survey of SME Climate Hub members found that the biggest barrier to action is a lack of in-house skills and knowledge, which was raised by almost two-thirds (63%) of those surveyed. The second most common barrier, raised by half of the respondents, was funding.</li> <li>• Anecdotally, the evidence base for this strategy, recorded that few Solihull businesses take up business support offerings.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Influence/lobbying</b>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WMCA</li> <li>• Local delivery partners</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> <li>• LEP funding of Growth Hub</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in carbon emissions from SMBC businesses</li> <li>• SMBC businesses are more confident in their net zero goods and services, differentiating them in their respective markets</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>C5) Undertake long term market engagement and readiness activities with local suppliers that are in, or could move into, the retrofit market to engage them in upcoming regional/government led funding opportunities.</b>
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<b>Priority Area</b>	Support retrofit in existing residential and commercial buildings and sustainable construction in new developments
<b>Description</b>	Maximise the opportunity of retrofit work for businesses in Solihull by creating a network of local suppliers to enable quick and efficient communication when new opportunities/funding streams arise. Ensure that all suppliers engaged have (or are committed to achieving) the TrustMark standard.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	Emissions from residential buildings make up 27% of Solihull's carbon emissions. Funding for retrofit work is currently fragmented and is generally allocated on an annual basis. There are also challenges with some retrofit businesses not working to high standards with regards to technical specification and customer care. Building relationships with trusted businesses should lead to better outcomes for SMBC residents.
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	Lead
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Capital</li> <li>• WMCA</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WMCA</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in carbon emissions from SMBC homes</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>C6) Explore the potential of different funding models (both public and private) to achieve SMBC's retrofit aims across its public and private housing stock.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Support retrofit in existing residential and commercial buildings and sustainable construction in new developments
<b>Description</b>	Undertake a housing stock analysis across the Borough and based on the results of that explore innovative funding models (e.g. green bonds and critical demand approaches) that will achieve the best retrofit outcomes for the area.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	Emissions from residential buildings make up 27% of Solihull's carbon emissions. Funding for retrofit work is currently fragmented and is generally allocated on an annual basis. More innovative funding streams could allow a steadier flow of funding to support retrofit work.
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	Lead
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Energy Capital</li> </ul>

<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	N/A
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in carbon emissions from SMBC homes</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	C7) Engage with developers who wish to work in the SMBC area in the next 10 years to share the low carbon ambition of the Council, as reflected in the Draft Local Plan.
<b>Priority Area</b>	Support retrofit in existing residential and commercial buildings and sustainable construction in new developments
<b>Description</b>	Undertake market engagement activities with developers to work together to share the Council's net zero vision and ambition. Potential to work together to agree high level ways of working to achieve joint ambitions.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	Work with partners to deliver plans for growth and expansion across the Borough (Theme D)
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	The Solihull MBC draft Local Plan (LP) outlines the need for 15,000 new homes in Solihull by 2036. The draft LP also sets out ambitious policies and targets relating to climate change and net zero. In particular, Policy P9 Mitigation and Adapting to Climate Change, sets out its ambition to make sure new development coming forward reduces carbon emissions and helps the transition to a low carbon economy.
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Influence</b>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>Homes England</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DLUHC / Homes England</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New homes built in the Borough are low carbon</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>C8) Research the biodiversity opportunities on the sites of Solihull's large businesses</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Explore the role of large businesses as custodians of large landholdings and significant assets for net zero
<b>Description</b>	Undertake an audit with the 20 largest businesses in the SMBC area to understand their land holdings and develop a joint action plan to deliver improved biodiversity outcomes for the Borough.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	Improved biodiversity outcomes support net zero ambitions by capturing carbon emissions. It is important that the business community play their part in this effort.

<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Delivering Action</b>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SSVG</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate sponsorship via SSVG</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved biodiversity outcomes support the achievement of net zero targets</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>C9) Undertake promotional activity to ensure that businesses have the knowledge and experience to make their assets/buildings resilient to the changing climate, drawing on best practice being developed regionally and nationally.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Explore the implications of large businesses as custodians of large landholders and significant assets for net zero
<b>Description</b>	This work could be undertaken through a strengthened Solihull Sustainability Visioning Group.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	N/A
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	The UK is likely to see wetter winters and drier summers, with extreme events happening more frequently. Wildfires are set to increase by 50% by 2099, and severe flooding events will become the new normal. The WMCA has made this one of their five principles of WM2041: 'we will boost our resilience to climate change'.
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Influencing</b> - Lead via SSVG
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC</li> <li>WMCA</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	N/A
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC businesses are more resilient to the changing climate</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>C10) Take part in the WMCA industrial symbiosis programme, which aims to unlock investment, innovation and circularity in strategic regional locations.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Develop circular economy approaches in Solihull
<b>Description</b>	This is a live WMCA project that came out the WMCA Circular Economy route map that is at the business plan stage. Industrial symbiosis involves materials and resource transactions between businesses, through the direct reuse of one company's waste streams as another's raw materials.



	Industrial symbiosis allows materials to be used in a more sustainable way, contributing to a productive circular economy and reducing carbon emissions.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	Support innovation within the Borough (Theme A)
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	Industrial symbiosis can unlock many benefits for the West Midlands, its businesses and local communities. These include cost savings, new business opportunities and business resilience to supply chain disruptions and resource scarcity.
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Influencing</b></li> </ul>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC</li> <li>• WMCA</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current programme funded by WMCA</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC businesses are more resilient to resource pricing and reduce carbon emissions</li> </ul>

## Theme D: Thriving Places

We have developed a range of actions to *(re)generate distinctive and economically vibrant places across our Borough*. This includes:

### Existing Activity

#### We will continue to:

- support developers and transport planners in increasing active travel infrastructure in Solihull, particularly around town and local centres – and focus on ensuring that 15-minute neighbourhoods are also places of local employment
- take steps to enhance digital and 5G connectivity in town and local centres, providing the fastest connections to attract digital businesses to the area.
- deliver the Shirley Economic Growth Plan, to improve the experience, environment and public realm in the town, and introduce markets, events and meanwhile uses to create a more sustainable town centre offer.
- support our town and local centres to develop initiatives to increase footfall and create thriving communities and distinct identities
- work with Birmingham Airport and the NEC to deliver their development ambitions, ensuring that it maximises opportunities for Solihull's communities whilst being done in a sustainable manner.

### 'Moonshot' Projects

<b>Action</b>	<b>D1) Deliver radical regeneration (socially, environmentally, economically) across North Solihull as a regionally significant Levelling-Up Zone within wider ambitions for UK Central</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver change within our town and local centres, making them more sustainable and attractive places</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the West Midlands Deeper Devolution Deal, support the development of the East Birmingham and North Solihull Levelling Up Zone, which will support neighbourhoods in rejuvenating their local economies, in conjunction with our partners.</li> <li>• Make the case for investing in North Solihull, with this case built around the missions put forward in the Levelling Up White Paper.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	Create a compelling value proposition for Solihull, promoting the Borough to policy makers and potential inward investors (Theme A)
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a considerable gap in the socio-economic performance of North Solihull relative to the rest of Solihull. average household income in North Solihull is</li> </ul>

	<p>31% lower than across the rest of the borough, with this gap rising to 46% when housing costs are taken into account (2018 data) <sup>7</sup>. The claimant unemployment rate is five times higher in North Solihull than across the rest of the borough (8.1% compared to 1.6%)<sup>8</sup> and the child poverty rate in North Solihull is 33% compared to 9% in the rest of the borough<sup>9</sup>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of this socio-economic gap between North Solihull and the rest of the Borough is reflected in public health data, with males in the most deprived 10% of the Solihull population having a life expectancy of 12.8 years less than those in the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods – this gap is 11.1 years amongst females<sup>10</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Influencing</b> – SMBC needs to influence and promote the need to for a Levelling-Up Zone in North Solihull to the West Midlands Combined Authority, in the hope of attracting more funding and recognition of the challenges faced by the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>West Midlands Combined Authority</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WM Deeper Devolution Deal</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement to the deprivation indicators (as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation) in North Solihull relative to the rest of the Borough.</li> </ul>

## Borough-Wide Initiatives

The initiatives we have developed to *(re)generate distinctive and economically vibrant places across our Borough* are:

- Maintain Solihull's position as a leading regional centre by delivering the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan
- Boost Chelmsley Wood's position as an important key local centre by delivering new public and private investment
- Align workspace strategy (Theme 1) with the concept of the 15-minute neighbourhood

<sup>7</sup> The Story of Solihull 2020, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 2020

<sup>8</sup> Understanding Inequalities in Solihull, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 2020

<sup>9</sup> HMRC: Personal tax credits - children in low income families local measure 2016

<sup>10</sup> Public Health England: [Public health outcomes framework 0.2iii Inequality in Life Expectancy at birth](#)

- Work with the UK Central and Arden Cross teams to actively attract investment and nurture employment/business growth in:
  - Low carbon/advanced engineering/ future mobility (linking to Theme 1)
  - Health innovation
- Work to maximise social value return on investment linked to Arden Cross
- Look to develop and embed the cultural sector within our town and local centres, with the possibility of bidding for Cultural Action Zone status for Solihull town centre (see Theme 1).
- Use UKSPF to trial open air markets to attract more people into town and local centres
- Look at opportunities for ‘Community Wealth Building’ initiatives within our most deprived communities.

<b>Action</b>	<b>D2) Maintain Solihull’s position as a leading regional centre by delivering the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver change within our town and local centres, making them more sustainable and attractive places</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelop Mell Square to create a truly diverse mixed-use space.</li> <li>• Support new landmark development on the Westgate site.</li> <li>• Develop a vibrant and new mixed-use destination at Eastgate, supporting living and working in a sustainable mixed-use development.</li> <li>• Enhance the public realm across the town centre, and work to promote active transport accessibility.</li> <li>• Delivery co-ordinated transport interventions, including a Solihull station that serves as a strong gateway and arrival point into the town centre.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the concept of ‘15-minute’ neighbourhoods in Solihull (Theme D)</li> <li>• Support and encourage both retrofit in residential and commercial buildings, and sustainable construction (Theme C)</li> <li>• Support the development of local area energy networks to meet the needs of new developments in the Borough and meet net zero targets (Theme C)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Town Centre Masterplan identifies a number of current weaknesses and threats facing our town centre, including: a limited offer for people arriving into Solihull; challenges for those arriving into Solihull by walking or cycling; the train station has a relatively poor environmental quality; there is little greenspace in the town centre; the need to be environmentally and socially</li> </ul>

	responsive to a changing demography and town centre needs.
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Delivering/Financing Projects &amp; Influencing</b> – work with partners to undertake the activities identified in the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Solihull BID</li> <li>• Developers and landowners in Solihull town centre</li> <li>• Local Community Organisations</li> <li>• West Midlands Combined Authority</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levelling Up Fund</li> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> <li>• Developer contributions</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of new housing and commercial development in Solihull town centre.</li> <li>• Increased footfall and spend in the town centre.</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>D3) Boost Chelmsley Wood's position as an important key town centre by delivering new public and private investment</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver change within our town and local centres, making them more sustainable and attractive places</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelop the Northwest Quarter to include more spaces to meet and enhance the public realm.</li> <li>• Design safer spaces for our communities to enjoy</li> <li>• Promote a greater mix of uses across the centre.</li> <li>• Ensure health, wellbeing and employment support services are available, providing support and advice for local residents.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the concept of '15-minute' neighbourhoods in Solihull (Theme D)</li> <li>• Support and encourage both retrofit in residential and commercial buildings, and sustainable construction (Theme C)</li> <li>• Support the development of local area energy networks to meet the needs of new developments in the Borough and meet net zero targets (Theme C)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chelmsley Wood Town Centre Masterplan has identified the needs to intervene in the town centre, to help transform the town centre through phased delivery over the next ten years. Chelmsley Wood faces a number of challenges, exemplified by the changes to the way in which the town centre is used. There are a number of vacant sites, which are in need of redevelopment to support the vitality of the high street.</li> </ul>

<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Delivering/Financing Projects &amp; Influencing</b> - work with partners to undertake the activities identified in the Chelmsley Wood Masterplan
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Developers and landowners in Chelmsley Wood town centre</li> <li>• Local Community Organisations</li> <li>• West Midlands Combined Authority</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levelling Up Fund</li> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> <li>• Developer contributions</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of new housing and commercial development in Chelmsley Wood town centre</li> <li>• Increased footfall and spend in the town centre</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>D4) Align workspace strategy (Theme A) with the concept of the 15-minute neighbourhood</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to services through the development of the concept of '15-minute' neighbourhoods in Solihull</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of '15-minute' neighbourhoods recognises that all residents within our Borough should be within a 15 minute walking radius of their 'daily needs', including a convenience retail offer and local services. This promotes more active travel options for local residents encouraging a shift from cars to more sustainable modes of transport. The emerging Solihull Connected Strategy promotes 15 minute neighbourhoods, as a way of enhancing transport in the Borough.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the right types of commercial space (particularly affordable and flexible workspace) to support sustained business growth (Theme A)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a large amount of development taking place in Solihull over the course of this Economic Strategy. SMBC has the potential to influence upcoming development (through planning) to create 15-minute neighbourhoods that create a more sustainable future for local communities.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Catalyst</b> – work with developers as new sites/developments come forward.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Developers</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	N/A
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of new development in adherence with the principles of 15-minute neighbourhoods</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>D5) Work with the UK Central, the Urban Growth Company and Arden Cross Ltd to actively attract investment and nurture employment/business growth in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Low carbon/advanced engineering/ future mobility (linking to Theme 1)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Priority Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance UK Central Hub as an exemplary development zone</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The substantial delivery of new employment space in UK Central and Arden Cross provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver a range of new business activity within Solihull. Both the low carbon/advanced engineering and future mobility have been identified as key growth sectors with the potential to develop at Arden Cross. SMBC should work with partners to realise the potential of these sectors in Arden Cross, with key partners and institutions including the University of Warwick</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a compelling value proposition for Solihull, promoting the Borough to policy makers and potential inward investors (Theme A)</li> <li>• Support the growth of small businesses (Theme A)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both the low carbon/advanced engineering and future mobility sectors have been identified as potential growth sectors within Solihull, particularly in line with development at UK Central.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Influence</b> – work with partners to raise the profile of UK Central and Arden Cross</li> </ul>
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• UK Central</li> <li>• Arden Cross</li> <li>• University of Warwick</li> <li>• Potential Investors</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC funded</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased inward investment into Solihull</li> <li>• Employment and business growth</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>D6) Work to maximise social value return on investment linked to the UK Central Hub</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Advance UK Central Hub as an exemplary development
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is extensive development and investment planned for Arden Cross, which has the potential to have a substantial impact on our Borough. We will work with investors to maximise the social value that can be</li> </ul>

	generated from their investment, working with local communities to ensure this is received in the most impactful way.
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop more socially conscious businesses in Solihull (Theme B)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in Arden Cross is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Solihull to instigate changes in our communities. We need to ensure that this is delivered, and that those investing in our Borough creates change that benefits all of us, particularly our most impoverished communities.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Influence</b> – work with partners to demonstrate the importance of delivering social value as part of investment linked to Arden Cross.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>UK Central</li> <li>Arden Cross</li> <li>Investors and Developers in Solihull</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No funding required</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More apprenticeships, work experience and internship opportunities for local people</li> <li>More investment into our more deprived communities</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>D7) Look to develop and embed the cultural sector within our town and local centres, with the possibility of bidding for Cultural Action Zone status for Solihull town centre (Theme A).</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Deliver change within our town and local centres, making them more sustainable and attractive places
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solihull already has a number of important cultural assets and businesses based in our centres, which breathe life into our high streets. To make our town and local centres more vibrant and sustainable places, this needs to be further encouraged, with support, space and funding given to cultural initiatives which enhance our high streets and make them places where people want to be.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the growth of a 'new economy' which builds on emerging strengths in the digital and creative sectors (Theme A)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a strong concentration of cultural infrastructure in the Borough, particularly the Core Theatre complex and Solihull Festival and Jazz Festival.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solihull’s cultural offer lack profile, innovation and diversity, and there are some mixed perceptions of its quality<sup>11</sup>.</li> <li>• The Borough has the opportunity to develop cultural infrastructure to support either a developed grassroots community offer or professional networks and support for cultural and creative industries.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC’s Role</b>	<b>Delivering/Financing Action</b> – develop an action plan (building on the <i>Cultural &amp; Creative Economy</i> report recommendations for supporting the cultural sector in our town centres.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Major cultural assets (e.g. Core Theatre, Solihull Festival and Jazz Festival)</li> <li>• Cultural Businesses</li> <li>• Visit Knowle</li> <li>• Parish Councils</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC funding</li> <li>• Cultural Action Zone funding</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced cultural offering in Solihull town centre</li> <li>• Increased footfall in town centre</li> <li>• Growth in the size of the cultural economy</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>D8) Trial open air markets to attract more people into town and local centres</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Deliver change within our town and local centres, making them more sustainable and attractive places
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trial open air markets within our town and local centres to encourage more people, and to support growing businesses in having an opportunity to sell their products and/or services to the community.</li> <li>• Look to host seasonal markets (as appropriate) to target key shopping seasons, in a bid to increase footfall and spend in our town and local centres.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a more entrepreneurial economy, through skills provision and business support (Theme A)</li> <li>• Support the growth of small businesses (Theme A)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our town and local centres are increasingly evolving, with the shift of retail to online shopping. There is a need to offer something different, which attracts people back, making them more vibrant places for people to shop, and therefore helping existing retail tenants.</li> <li>• Open air markets have been shown to increase footfall and spend in town and local centres and provide a ‘buzz’</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> Solihull’s Cultural & Creative Economy: Baseline Mapping & Initial Policy Recommendations, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 2022

	to encourage others to visit (as opposed to shopping from home).
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Delivering/Financing Action</b> – identify funding and develop a plan for trailing open air markets in our town centres.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC (Lead)</li> <li>• Solihull BID</li> <li>• Visit Knowle</li> <li>• Parish Councils</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased footfall in our town and local centres</li> <li>• Increased spend in our town and local centres</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>D9) Create opportunities for communities to take ownership of local net-zero activities and look for funding opportunities to support this.</b>
<b>Priority Area</b>	Work with local communities to develop place-based approaches to the Net-Zero transition
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot 'Community Wealth Building' projects in priority localities facing greater deprivation, with a focus on net-zero activities, ensuring that our communities lead the way in supporting Solihull's transition to net-zero.</li> </ul>
<b>Overlap with Other Themes / Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development of local area energy networks to meet the needs of new developments in the Borough and meet net zero targets (Theme C)</li> <li>• Better promote low carbon alternatives to local residents and businesses, linked to Social Value (Theme C)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale / Evidence of Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solihull has ambitions to be net-zero by 2041, with a need for our communities to be involved in this process, creating a bottom-up approach to reducing our collective environmental impact.</li> <li>• Our communities have the best knowledge of their local areas, and so are well-placed to develop initiatives that will help reduce our environmental impact.</li> <li>• Ownership of these assets will encourage more people to become involved in the transition to net-zero, and create new opportunities for people to help in their local areas, boosting civic pride and participation.</li> </ul>
<b>SMBC's Role</b>	<b>Catalyst</b> – work with community groups to build their capacity and resources (working in partnership with Birmingham by Birmingham Anchor Network), to enable them to take more ownership of local net-zero initiatives.
<b>Project Lead &amp; Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMBC</li> <li>• Community Groups/Organisations</li> <li>• Birmingham by Birmingham Anchor Network</li> </ul>

<b>Potential Sources of Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SMBC Funded</li></ul>
<b>Desired Outcome / Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More community ownership of local net-zero initiatives</li><li>• More civic pride and participation within the Borough</li></ul>