WORCESTERSHIRE

Worcestershire
Local Enterprise Partnership

2021/22

Delivery Plan

OUR VISION

"To create a connected, creative, dynamic economy for all."

The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) is one of 38 LEPs in England and is responsible for creating and delivering economic growth and jobs in the county. This is achieved through a partnership approach with the LEP bringing local businesses, local government, the third sector and the higher and further education sectors together to work collaboratively on a common, shared purpose.

WLEP plays a critical role in coordinating local and regional stakeholders at a strategic level to inform future local and regional economic priorities. This influencing and convening role has proved critical in brokering local consensus and buy-in on key investment priorities which has enabled the delivery of an impressive range of economic development schemes across the county over the last 10 years.

The last 18 months have been incredibly challenging for everyone due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the LEP have worked closely with partners during this time to provide a coordinated economic response across Worcestershire and we'll continue this collaboration as we continue the recovery. Looking forward, we are keen to move from economic recovery to growth and seeing existing and new businesses flourish. Later this year we will launch our refreshed economic strategy for the county, our Plan for Growth: 2020-2040, setting out exciting and ambitious plans for a connected, creative, dynamic economy for all.

In the meantime, this document outlines the key delivery plans for WLEP during 2021/22 as we continue to respond to the impact of the COVID pandemic, develop future initiatives, and play our role in supporting the wider West Midlands region.

Gary Woodman
Chief Executive

From left to right:

Luke Willetts - Director of Operations

Phoebe Dawson - Director of Business Engagement

Judy Chadwick - Director of Skills

Alison Dickinson - Project Manager

Kate Snell - Programme Manager

Alex Price - PR, Marketing & Communications Executive

Cesca Nutbeem - Cyber Executive (PR and Events) for Midlands CyberSecurity Cluster

Alex Pearson - Energy Project Lead

Jennie Humphries - Research and Analysis Lead

Linda Smith - Director of Enterprise & CEO of BetaDen

Matt Thomas - BetaDen Funding & Investment Manager

Helen Keegan BetaDen Communications and Community Manager

Donston Powell - BetaDen Marketing Assistant

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership

WORCESTERSHIRE GROWTH HUB
Worcestershire Business Central

From left to right:

Kevin Aisbitt - Growth Hub Manager

Randesh Kalar - Growth Hub Account Manager

Kul Sanghera - Growth Hub Account Manager

Gwen Davies - Growth Hub Strategic Account Manager

Sally Stevenson - Growth Hub Account Manager

Steven Winstanley - Growth Hub Navigator

Rhiannon Jones - Growth Hub Navigator

Simon Thistle - Growth Hub Project Manager

Paul Swinnerton - Growth Hub Project Support Officer

Lois Allart - Growth Hub Digital and Data Apprentice

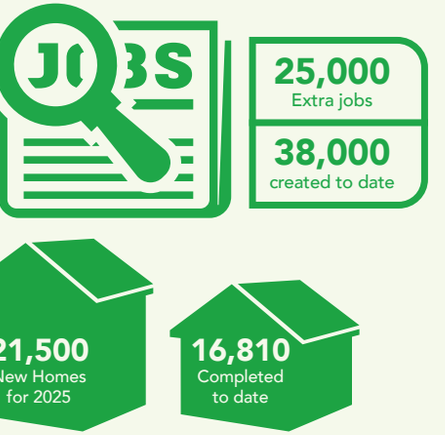
Finley Stanley - Growth Hub Digital Marketing Apprentice

OUR TARGETS

for 2025

£2.9B
increase in GVA target for 2025

£2.8B
increase in GVA since 2013



21,500
New Homes for 2025

16,810
Completed to date

WLEP-funded Programme: Progress Monitoring

WLEP is committed to monitoring and evaluating its funded schemes. Further information about our monitoring and evaluation framework can be found on our website **(https://www.wlep.co.uk/governance/)**. The following tables outlines the headline benefits achieved / forecast against our Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund programmes.

Output	Actual Achieved to Date	Forecast for 2021/22-2024/25	Total Actual & Forecast
Jobs Created	1,197	4,379	5,576
Construction Jobs	104	476	580
Housing Units	508	3,636	4,144
Commercial Floorspace (m)²	513,177	174,200	687,377
Businesses Assisted	360	90	450
Area of New or Improved Learning/Training Floorspace (m)²	24,088	11,130	35,218
New Learners Assisted	1,973	2,020	3,993
Kg of CO_2 Emissions Avoided	22,200	301,700	323,900

PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

The activity of the WLEP is guided by the overarching economic strategy in place. Since 2014, this has been the Strategic Economic Plan ((SEP) 2015-2025).

Later this year, the SEP will be superseded by a refreshed strategy, informed by an extensive stakeholder engagement programme, involving local businesses, MPs, local government partners, FE and HE partners and other stakeholder organisations.

As a result, WLEP's key priorities will now be informed by the Worcestershire Plan for Growth: 2020-2040, and the focus for the next 12 months is outlined below, in line with the three areas of focus set out for LEPs by Government.

1 - STRATEGY

- Launch the Worcestershire Plan for Growth: 2020-2040 – a refreshed economic strategy and project pipeline for the county, setting the vision for Worcestershire up to 2040.
- Coordinate and collaborate with key partners and stakeholder organisations on the Economic Recovery Plan for Worcestershire.
- Engage and contribute to the National LEP Review, working with central government, the LEP Network and local stakeholders on the evolving LEP role.
- Develop and implement the Business Engagement strategy (2021/22) for the Worcestershire Growth Hub.
- Execute the BetaDen Business Plan and continue the transition from public-funded to a self-sustaining operating model.
- Develop and launch the Local Skills Report 2021 for Worcestershire.

2 - DELIVERY

Local Growth Funded Programme

IDEAS

1 **Launch of new commercial entity** resulting from our Worcestershire 5G testbed programme – nexGworx

PEOPLE

2 **Develop and implement a digital skills** strategy for the county for 2021-26

3 **Continue to work with education** establishments in Worcestershire to reach 8 Gatsby Benchmarks and support young people to understand the careers of the county's employers

INFRASTRUCTURE

4 **A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement** Programme (active travel improvements) – set to be complete in Autumn 2021

5 **Pershore Northern Link Road scheme –** continue work on this scheme with final completion scheduled for Summer 2022 Delivery of our Getting Building Fund programme – outlined overleaf

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

6 **Delivery of the National Peer Networks** programme and enhancement to local business support offer with introduction of Specialist Business Advisor support via the Worcestershire Growth Hub

PLACE

7 **Support Green Recovery and** Decarbonisation agenda across the county through support of key projects and initiatives including local COP26 events

8 **Support Redditch Borough Council with** their Towns Deal investment programme for Redditch town centre

9 **Support Worcester City Council with** their Future High Street and Towns Deal investments for Worcester city

10 **Support Wyre Forest District Council** with their Future High Streets Funding programme in Kidderminster

3 - GOVERNANCE

•Establish a new sub-group, the Worcestershire Innovation Board, to lead on development of an innovation action plan.

•The Worcestershire Innovation Board will address a key objective of the Plan for Growth: 2020-2040, to stimulate investment and innovation across the county.

• Review and enhance private sector representation across WLEP Board and sub-boards in 2021/22.

GETTING BUILDING FUND PROGRAMME

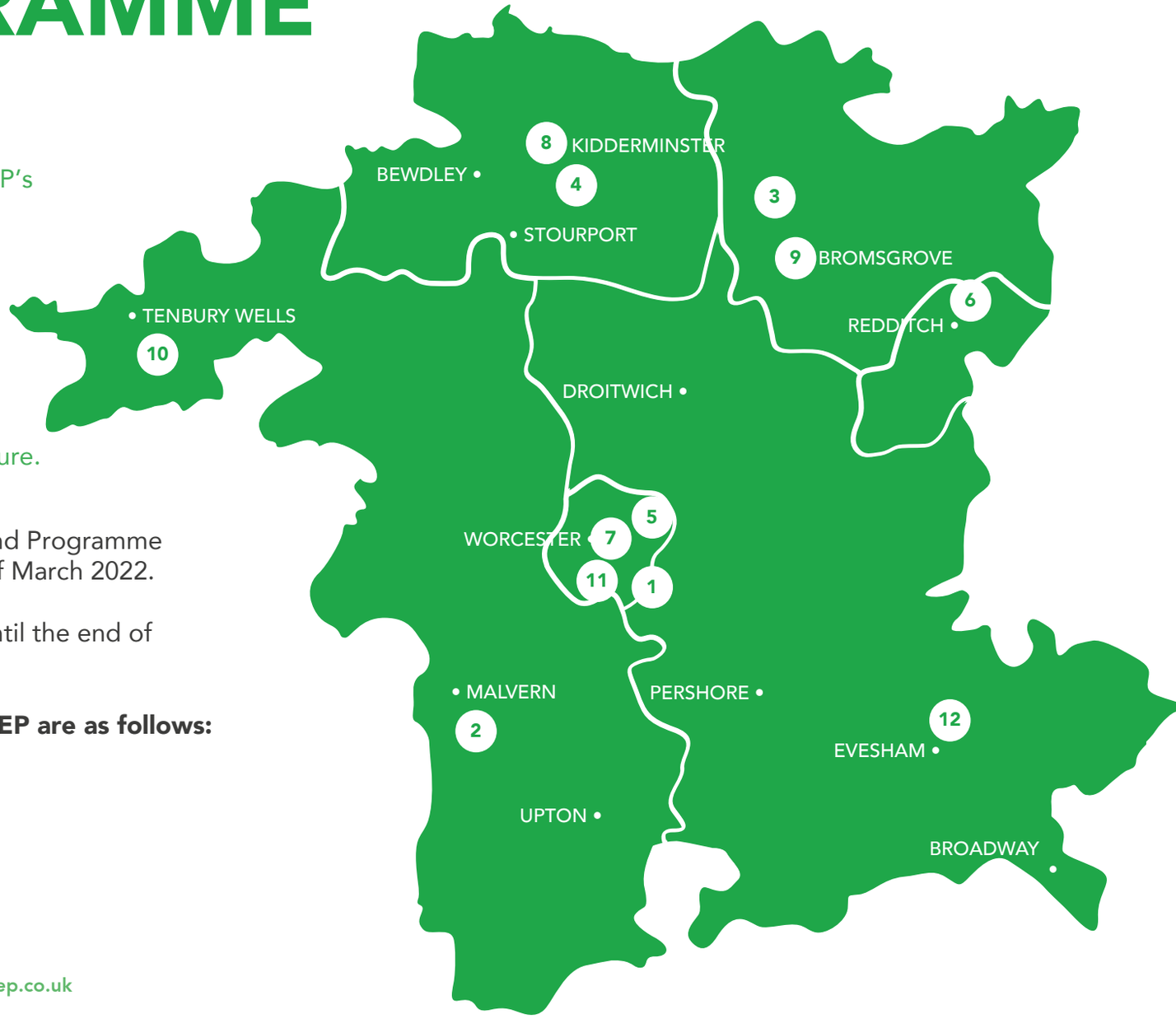
The Government announced in August 2020 that LEP's across England would receive additional funding through the 'Getting Building Fund' programme to support local economic recovery following the COVID-19 Lockdown.

A total of £900M was made available across the UK, with Worcestershire LEP receiving a total of £12M to be allocated on the following projects designed to help support jobs, skills, and infrastructure.

All projects that are part of the Getting Building Fund Programme will need to expend their GBF funding by the end of March 2022.

Project deliverables will continue to be measured until the end of March 2025, as per Government guidelines.

The 12 projects selected by the Worcestershire LEP are as follows:



DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

1 **Superfast Worcestershire – Rural Gigabit Connectivity:** This project will extend support to a further 40-50 rural and hard to reach community broadband schemes, enabling 2,000 additional premises to benefit from improved digital connectivity.

INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

2 Enabling delivery of **Malvern Technology Park:** further expansion of the existing Malvern Hills Science Park will aim to create a European-scale technology park providing further commercial space for investment.

TRANSFORMING OUR PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY

3 **A456 Improvements, Hagley:** This project will support the congestion relief schemes on A456 Kidderminster Road/Worcester Road (B4187) junction and Cattle Market Junction, to improve journey times and improve traffic efficiency.

4 **Hoobrook Island capacity improvements, Kidderminster:** This project will reduce delays on all 4 arms of the Hoobrook roundabout and improve the reliability of journey times and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

MODERNISING OUR TOWN AND CITY CENTRES

5 **Worcester Shrub Hill and Station Masterplan:** This will support the development of a vibrant new Shrub Hill Quarter, through improved connectivity and a transformed Grade II listed railway and integrated transport hub to serve as a new iconic arrival gateway to the City. The project will deliver the technical and engineering business case for the Station and underpin the early strategic land acquisition.

6 **Redditch Transport Interchange:** This project supports the regeneration plans for Redditch Town Centre, through the development of the Transport Interchange and redevelopment of the Railway Quarter to create mixed use commercial and residential quarters enhanced by improved rail connectivity. This project will deliver the business case and supporting design work and secure the immediate land acquisition.

SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

7 **Health, Wellbeing and Inclusive Sport:** The University of Worcester are transforming their Severnside Campus, and plan to create a Regional Centre for Health & Medicine and build a new 'world-first' International Inclusive Cricket and Education Centre. This project helps deliver the critical infrastructure for the site, to include on-site renewable energy & facilities for green transport, delivering 20.7 tonnes reduction in carbon emissions per annum.

8 **Construction and Automotive Skills Centre in Kidderminster:** This project will enable Kidderminster College to relocate its existing Construction and Automotive provision to a larger structurally improved unit, providing capacity to respond to growth in demand and the changing sector skills needs, embracing the shift to clean growth.

MIDLANDS ENGINE | HM Government

GREEN RECOVERY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

9 **Low Carbon Housing, Bromsgrove:** This project will improve the energy efficiency of 61 new residential developments in Bromsgrove, addressing the twin objectives of the national net zero target by 2050 and the alleviation of fuel poverty, while helping meet local identified housing needs.

10 **Flood Resilience, Tenbury Wells:** This project supports the Flood Defence work for Tenbury Wells, to reduce the impact of future flood events on the local residential and business communities and the wider economy.

11 **Keepax Bridge, Worcester:** This project supports the delivery of a new active travel corridor, providing a resilient river crossing and wider access to employment, leisure and education opportunities, for communities in north Worcester.

THRIVING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

12 **Vale Business Park Development:** This project supports the growth potential of between 7-10 small to medium businesses, through the delivery of 10 industrial starter units to help fill the identified gap in the market for small-medium scale quality commercial space.

SUCCESSES SO FAR

WLEP and partners have established a successful track record for delivery over the last decade. WLEP continues to meet and exceed the standards and expectations of Government as evidenced through our Annual Performance Reviews.

We continue to operate across a broad economic agenda, adding value and leveraging investment into the county to support sustainable economic growth and improve productivity.

Here are a selection of successes and achievements in Worcestershire, from across the partnership, over the past 12 months.

www.wlep.co.uk

IDEAS

- BetaDen, Technology Accelerator – Pilot phase (3 cohorts) completed 2021 - Cohort 4.0 now in residence
- Worcestershire 5G Testbed Programme Report published key findings and recommendations

Linda Smith
Director of Enterprise

"A phenomenal delivery year despite the impact of COVID-19. BetaDen, Worcestershire's Technology Accelerator continues to thrive, completing Cohort 3.0's showcase in March 2021 and launching Cohort 4.0 which attracted a high calibre of applicants and exciting future emerging technologies looking for development opportunities. This really illustrates how the technology economy in Worcestershire can be supported here in the county."

PEOPLE

- Launched the Worcestershire Careers helpline
- Launched the Worcestershire Jobs website
- Engaged over 500 placements in national Kickstart initiative with local employers
- Increased the number of educational establishments supporting a local focus on careers planning in education (from 45 to 65)
- Gained funding to support the implementation of the Midlife MOT for over 50's in Worcestershire to focus on career, health and wealth

Judy Chadwick
Director of Skills

"The last year has highlighted the need for employers to focus on succession planning and accelerated the growth of digital skills across all workforces within the county. The team has continued to deliver support to young people within educational settings and those entering the workforce to understand the needs of our employers post-COVID pandemic. Delivering interventions to support residents return to work and stay in work has been crucial and the launch of the Worcestershire Jobs website and Midlife MOT programme has been essential to the strategy during this time."

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Completion of the Churchfields scheme providing access to new housing development land (Kidderminster)
- Completion of the A38 improvement works at M5 J4 and M42 J1 (Bromsgrove)
- Phase 2 of the HoW Duckworth Centre of Engineering facility completed and opened
- Kidderminster Rail Station refurbishments completed
- Pinvin element of the Pershore Northern Link scheme completed

Luke Willetts
Director of Operations

"Despite a challenging 12 months for the entire economy, Worcestershire partners recovered well, working with the construction industry, to kick-start activity across the county on a number of infrastructure schemes already in delivery across Worcestershire, minimising disruption and delays following the initial national lock-down restrictions. We have seen key housing, skills capital, and transport schemes all delivered in the last 12 months, along with the commencement of 12 additional projects via the Getting Building Fund programme."

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

- Worcestershire Growth Hub operating model review completed, and recommendations implemented including managed transition to WLEP
- Over 4,000 businesses received medium or high-intervention support via the Worcestershire Growth Hub (information, diagnostic or referral)
- 80+ businesses completed the Peer Network programme - 10 cohorts delivered locally
- 160+ businesses accessed Worcestershire Growth Hub's Specialist Advisor Support Programme in response to Brexit and COVID-19 issues

Phoebe Dawson
Director of Business Engagement

"Worcestershire LEP made great strides supporting the business community in probably the most important year in most businesses recent history.

The Worcestershire Growth Hub had its busiest year to date with not only a significant increase in engagement, as they supported businesses through the pandemic, but the team also delivered 10 Peer network cohorts, a successful Key Account Management programme with DIT partners and the ERDF Small Business Grant scheme.

"I'd encourage Worcestershire businesses to stay tuned to the WLEP & Growth Hub websites to learn more about the work we do and how we can support your ambitions."

PLACE

- Successful Future High Streets Funding announcements for Kidderminster (Wyre Forest) and Worcester to enable diversification of high street offers
- Town Investment Prospectuses completed for Redditch and Worcester and submitted to Government in Towns Deal funding bids

Gary Woodman
Chief Executive

"The pandemic has changed the role and economy of place. In one sense many businesses have struggled through the economic crisis and this has led to a challenging business environment for many owners and managers. The impacts of digitalisation of the high street and other sectors has been accelerated by the economic shock and therefore we are seeing changes in the role of place and working patterns which drives different behaviours and opportunities."

STRATEGIC AND REGIONAL INFLUENCE

WLEP plays a key role in helping to identify, coordinate and influence opportunities on a broader scale which goes beyond the geographic borders of the county. This is achieved through a partnership approach with local, regional, and national stakeholders to explore the opportunities that will benefit the wider region's economy, connectivity, sustainability and growth ambitions.

Our existing areas of interest are set out below:

SECTORS

- **Cyber Resilience alliance –** Cyber security is a key sector within Worcestershire. The WLEP is part of the Cyber Resilience Alliance which is a collaboration with 3 neighbouring LEPs to explore the Science and Innovation Audit findings in 2019, identifying opportunities for joint projects and inward investment.
- **Midlands Cyber –** working in partnership with DIT, WLEP are leading on the Midlands Cyber initiative which aims to showcase the region's leading cyber cluster

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- **North Cotswold Line Task Force –** A Strategic Outline Business Case has been developed by the Taskforce which includes membership from LEPs and Local Authorities within the catchment, including Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire and representatives from the Rail Industry. Work is underway with Government (DfT) to seek further investment to support development of the business case to the next required stage**.**
- **The Trans Midland Trade Corridor (A46) –** WLEP continues to support Midlands Connect and partners in promoting this key economic corridor for investment and improvement with a Productivity Growth Plan.
- **Duelling of Carrington Bridge –** WLEP played a key role in supporting development of a business case for Government funding, which was secured, and construction is now well underway.
- **A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme improvements –** WLEP will continue to work with local partners to ensure the business case for further investment into this key transport route is robust and attracts Government funding to deliver.

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Midlands Engine Digital Board –** WLEP chairs this pan-Midlands board tasked with driving the digital strategy to maximise the opportunities afforded by digital technology to tackle the productivity challenges.
- **West Midlands 5G –** Through our learnings from the Worcestershire 5G testbed, we will continue to work with West Midlands 5G on showcasing the benefits of this new technology and raising awareness to encourage investment and adoption across our SME business base to improve productivity.

INWARD INVESTMENT

- **International Delegations –** WLEP continues to work with partners from Department for International Trade (DIT) to identify potential delegation missions to Worcestershire from locations around the globe. Missions are set to recommence in 2022 depending on safety regulations around travel.
- **Midlands Cyber and Maryland –** WLEP represented Midlands Cyber as it signed its extension to the Memorandum of Understanding with State of Maryland Department for Commerce. Building on a successful three years delivery, WLEP have agreed an action plan which includes further trade missions, online webinars and 'meet the buyer' events.
- **Investment –** WLEP will carry on working with partners from Department for International Trade and other government departments to support Worcestershire based businesses (foreign-owned and domestic) to invest in their Worcestershire sites.
- **Game Changer Sites –** WLEP and partners regionally will continue to promote the various 'game changer' employment sites being developed in Worcestershire to help encourage organisations outside the county to relocate within Worcestershire.

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

I am sure you'll agree that Worcestershire LEP continues to work hard alongside our partner organisations and stakeholders, for the benefit of Worcestershire and the wider Midlands region.

This 2021/22 Delivery Plan once again sets out WLEP's continued commitment to creating a connected, creative, and dynamic economy for all. I remain proud of the achievements and efforts made across the partnership and county, particularly set against the challenging backdrop of COVID-19 with which we have all had to wrestle over the last 18 months. It is important to reflect and celebrate successes, and there are plenty to point to across the partnership from the last 12 months, including the cutting-edge technology insights gleaned through our Worcestershire 5G testbed work, the delivery of significant transport schemes across the county including the A38 improvements around Bromsgrove, the refurbishment of Kidderminster Railway station, the second-busiest station in the county, and local highways works completed to enable a housing-led scheme at Churchfields in Kidderminster.

I've also been hugely impressed by initiatives implemented across the skills agenda to respond to the impact of COVID, including dedicated careers advice and support for young people affected by the cancellation of national exams to help them understand their future choices. We've also deployed a Worcestershire Jobs match website, to help individuals and businesses affected by job losses and/or impact of furlough to flag job opportunities across the county. We were also pleased to support Heart of Worcestershire College with the completion of Phase 2 of their Duckworth Centre of Engineering facility in Worcester which will provide future skills to meet the demands of local employers.

It is important we continue to collaborate across the private, public and education sectors to respond to the pandemic, but to also look ahead to the medium-long term too, to ensure we build back better. Our Getting Building Fund programme is a key part of this, and has helped to stimulate key parts of the economy, during the down-turn, including the construction industry, to provide economic assets and benefits that will be felt over the long-term. This includes investments to improve our digital connectivity in rural areas, a zero-carbon housing development and a new automotive and construction skills facility to meet growing and emerging skills demands in Kidderminster and the Wyre Forest district, within these sectors.

Looking ahead, 2021/22 will be an important year for WLEP, as we will be launching our new county-wide economic strategy, Worcestershire's Plan for Growth 2020-2040. This will set out our ambitious growth plans for Worcestershire, informed by an extensive stakeholder engagement programme, and a robust evidence base as we look ahead to a 2040 horizon. We are building on a position of strength, following significant local investments made under our previous Strategic Economic Plan (2015-2025). Our continued commitment to invest in physical and digital connectivity will place the county in a strong position to leverage further investment, support start-up and scale-up businesses and improve productivity.

Finally, we will continue to work with local stakeholders and central government as the National LEP review currently underway seeks to articulate an evolved role for LEPs, supporting Government's Levelling-up agenda.

This will be supported through our joined-up work with the Worcestershire Growth Hub as we continue to play a strategic convening role, underpinned by rich, robust local business intelligence to inform the future direction of Worcestershire.

I believe that we have a clear vision and strategy and are in a strong position to deliver on this for Worcestershire.

Mark Stansfeld

Mark Stansfeld

Chair of the Worcestershire LEP

Get involved with Worcestershire LEP:

- **LinkedIn:** Worcestershire LEP
- **Twitter:** @WorcsLEP
- **Instagram:** @WorcsLEP
- **Soundcloud:** Worcestershire LEP
- **Spotify:** Worcestershire LEP
- **YouTube:** Worcestershire LEP
- **Phone:** 01905 672700
- **Website:** www.wlep.co.uk
- **Email:** enquiries@wlep.co.uk

Worcestershire
Local Enterprise Partnership

MIDLANDS ENGINE | HM Government

WORCESTERSHIRE GROWTH HUB
Worcestershire Business Central