



**West Midlands  
India Partnership**

# Stronger Together

**A new Strategy for the West  
Midlands India Partnership**

**Executive Summary**



**West Midlands  
Growth Company**

**UK INDIA**  
BUSINESS COUNCIL



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India is a global economic powerhouse with a strong and well-established economic and cultural relationship with the West Midlands. This includes a ‘living bridge’ of nearly 200,000 ethnic Indians who live and work in the region.

As the UK and India both rebuild from the impact of Covid-19, and with the West Midlands hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2022, the region has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to extend and deepen its unique relationship with India.

The West Midlands India Partnership (WMIP) was established in June 2020 to drive collaborative engagement between the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and India to unlock mutually beneficial and sustainable economic opportunities.

This document sets out the WMIP’s new five-year strategy for working with India.

It has been developed by the WMIP, with strategic advice and approval from the WMIP’s Advisory and Executive Boards, inputs from key stakeholders in the region and in India, and analytical support from PwC and the UK India Business Council (UKIBC).

At its heart are five ambitious and actionable recommendations for the WMIP:

## 1.



### The West Midlands: The Beating Heart of the UK’s Relationship with India

Promoting the region as being central to the ‘living bridge’ between the UK and India; a top destination for Indian tourists; and increasing direct connectivity between India and Birmingham Airport.

## 2.



### Growing the West Midlands-India Science and Education Partnership

Driving innovation through accelerating R&D collaboration with India on shared challenges; positioning the West Midlands as India’s number one innovation partner in the UK; and attracting outstanding Indian talent (both academic and professional) to study in the region.

## 3.



### A Win-Win Trade and Investment Opportunity

Working with India to increase two-way trade and investment through an integrated approach; establishing more dynamic corridor partnerships; being a leading enabler of India’s Industry 4.0 aspirations; and positioning the West Midlands as the UK location of choice to fulfil India’s global innovation ambitions.

## 4.



### Team West Midlands: A Partnership Approach to Sustained Engagement with India

Increasing and enhancing the region’s collective engagement with India to increase our impact. More specifically, investing in the WMIP to deliver more sustained, mutually beneficial partnerships, and more shared economic outcomes.

## 5.



### Birmingham 2022: Strengthening the West Midlands – India Relationship

Maximising our impact, and forging new West Midlands-India relationships, by leveraging the Commonwealth Games; its parallel Business and Tourism Programme; and the India-UK 2030 Roadmap.



# 2.

## Why India?

- 2.1 Economy and People
- 2.2 India Going Global

2.1

## Economy and people

**India is a global economic powerhouse, with immense growth potential. It is the 6th largest economy by GDP and is set to be the 3rd largest by 2030.**

This will be driven by India's demographic dividend which will fuel its economy, creating 68 million new wealthy consumers by 2025.

India has taken great strides in improving its competitiveness and business environment. India ranked 63rd in the World Bank's 2020 *Doing Business Index*, leaping from 142nd place in 2015, and it has opened its economy to FDI in most sectors.

At the sectoral level, India has strong capabilities, growth trajectories and technology needs aligned to the West Midlands' strengths and needs. This creates outstanding partnering opportunities across the West Midlands' Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) growth priorities.

India Growth Sectors Aligned to the West Midlands' Local Industrial Strategy

<b>Future Mobility:</b>	India's Electric Vehicle (EV) market is predicted to grow at a CAGR of 44% between 2020-2027 and hit 6.34 million-unit annual sales by 2027. This is driven by the growth of the middle class, the young population, and government action, to deliver its vision of 100% electric mobility by 2030.
<b>Creative Technologies:</b>	India is a world-leader in Creative Tech. Its Information Technology (IT) industry is worth £140 billion and is expected to grow at around 10% CAGR to reach £216-252 billion by 2025 <sup>1</sup> . While more nascent, its Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) industries are poised to soar. India's start-up ecosystem is the 2nd largest in the world, growing at a CAGR of 10-12%.
<b>Data-driven Healthcare:</b>	India's healthcare sector was worth £202 billion in 2020 and is estimated to be worth £364 billion by 2025 <sup>2</sup> . This is due to rising demand for affordable healthcare, technological advancements, big data analytics, telemedicine, and government initiatives such as e-health.
<b>Modern Services:</b>	India's professional and business services are globally competitive, and its Fintech ecosystem is the third largest globally (and among the fastest growing).
<b>Net Zero:</b>	India is investing heavily in net zero, generating approximately a quarter of its power from renewables in 2020. It further has plans to drive efficiencies and environmental improvements across industry, transport and cities.

India faces huge social and economic challenges which it is tackling through a range of policies and programmes, creating win-win partnering opportunities for the West Midlands and India.

India's cornerstone initiative is *Make in India*, which aims to turn India into a global manufacturing hub. Additional strategies are driving education, skills, innovation and growth outcomes. Simultaneously, it is addressing challenges such as healthcare, urbanisation and achieving net zero.

India's strategic interventions have contributed to it developing clusters and economic corridors with world-leading capabilities. These include the regions of Maharashtra (Mumbai and Pune), Telangana (Hyderabad), National Capital Region (Delhi), and Karnataka (Bengaluru).

The UK and India enjoy a unique relationship based on centuries of shared history, culture, language, and democratic links. One result of this is a 'living bridge' of 1.6 million ethnic Indians in the UK, with more than one in ten choosing to live in the West Midlands.

Bilateral cooperation is strong and set to be enhanced further by the signing of the *India-UK 2030 Roadmap* in May 2021.

This has elevated the relationship to a *Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSR)* and includes initiatives and commitments that will enhance opportunities for more cooperation.

For example, the intent to agree a UK-India *Free Trade Agreement (FTA)* which will play greatly to the West Midlands' strengths.

Undoubtedly India remains a potentially challenging market, especially with high tariff and non-tariff barriers. But its lack of FTAs with most major economies (including the EU, US and China) makes the anticipated UK-India FTA a potential game-changer.

2.2

## India going global

**As the world's largest democracy - and as its companies and people are increasingly going global through investment, trade, innovation, education and tourism growth - India is rapidly becoming a major global player.**

In its pursuit of new markets, new partners and new commercial know-how, India is already a major international investor, ranking 16th globally for Outward Direct Investment (ODI) flows at its peak in 2018.

As the 3rd largest recipient of Indian ODI in the last two years, the UK is already a destination of choice for Indian firms expanding globally.

It is anticipated that this will accelerate over the coming years, as Indian firms pursue global innovation capability in advanced technologies and other emerging sectors as a springboard for growth.

Moreover, India's booming domestic market, low-cost base, digital skills, and through the investment incentives delivered via the *Make in India* strategy, placed it in 10th place for inbound FDI in 2018.

India is a hugely important and influential trading nation, ranking 8th for services exports and 10th for imports in services and goods<sup>3</sup>.

UK-India trade reached a record high in 2019 at £23.3 billion, making India the UK's 15th largest trading partner. But the UK continues to underperform in areas of relative export strength, including advanced manufacturing and ICT services, which again creates potential opportunities for the West Midlands.

India is the 5th largest R&D spender globally (based on Purchasing Power Parity), although its private sector is responsible for just 37% of total R&D spend. In comparison, private sector R&D investment is 65% in the UK, 72% in the US, and 77% in China<sup>4</sup>.

Indian investment is also highly concentrated, with 26 Indian companies from the automotive, pharma and IT sectors among the world's top 2,500 R&D spenders. These companies, together with India's fastest growing innovators, offer the UK huge potential for R&D-intensive FDI and dynamic private sector partnerships.

Indian government-funded R&D is also increasingly focused on emerging technologies which play to the UK's strengths (such as low carbon and AI) with G2G agreements underpinning international collaborations.

International companies are also scaling their R&D activities in India, tapping into its talent and low-cost base.

India's growing consumer market and start-up ecosystem is driving increased private equity and venture capital activity, with investments worth £32.24 billion in 2020.

As regulations are relaxed and incentives increased, equity investment - worth £32.24 billion in 2020 - is expected to grow rapidly, including in international assets.

India's Ultra-High-Net-Worth-Individuals (UHNWIs) population<sup>5</sup> is increasingly investing in overseas assets and it is the fastest growing globally, standing at 6,884 (and expected to reach 11,198 by 2025).

After China, and with 750,000 studying overseas and rising fast, India is globally the largest source of international higher education students.


In 2019 – and in response to the UK government announcing plans to introduce the Graduate Route post-study work visa - Indian student numbers in the UK doubled to 55,465 students.

While there remains a lack of policy clarity, *India's National Education Plan (NEP)* should create opportunities for overseas universities to serve students in India directly, and through partnering with Indian institutions.

The Indian outbound tourism market is booming, worth £16.5 billion in 2019<sup>7</sup> and expected to grow steeply in the coming years. If travel returns to pre-pandemic trends, this could potentially generate revenues of around £45 billion by 2026<sup>8</sup>.

With 692,000 visits, the UK was the 10th most visited destination by Indian travellers on overnight trips in 2019, worth £753 million. VisitBritain<sup>9</sup> forecasts Indian visits to increase from 692,000 in 2019 to 826,000 in 2029, while losing market share to France and other nations over the same period.

The UK is well connected to India by air, with direct flights to/from London and Birmingham Airports.

 <span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; letter-spacing: 0.5em;">D E P A R T U R E S</span>			
Time	Flight	Destination	
12:00	OD 1961	DELHI	
12:15	PN 0034	MUMBAI	
12:20	T3 0529	BENGALURU	
12:30	PN 2415	CHENNAI	
12:50	GI 1872	KOLKATTA	
12:55	T3 0944	HYDERABAD	
13:20	SF 2778	KOCHI	
13:45	OD 0061	AHMEDABAD	
13:50	BK 1532	GOA	
14:05	OD 3487	JAIPUR	
14:30	PN 0194	NAGPUR	
14:35	SF 0028	MUMBAI	

Flights to all of the destinations pictured maybe not be available from Birmingham Airport.





# 3.

## West Midlands and India

- 3.1 Overview of the West Midlands in 2021 and beyond
- 3.2 Trade and investment
- 3.3 Innovation, education and skills
- 3.4 Tourism and connectivity

### 3.1 Overview of the West Midlands in 2021 and beyond

**The West Midlands is uniquely positioned within the UK to accelerate cooperation with India to unlock mutually beneficial economic outcomes.**

The West Midlands is an innovation powerhouse with outstanding capabilities that are closely aligned to India's economic ambitions and needs, and complements India's appetite for rapid, sustained growth.

The West Midlands also has a deep, longstanding relationship with India – historically, culturally and economically. This is why the region ranks higher than all other UK regions (apart from the South East & London) across most relevant indicators:

West Midlands -India – key indicators

Theme	Key indicators	Latest data	English region ranking
Trade and Investment	Indian - origin FDI value in West Midlands (£ million)	£457m	2nd
	Indian - origin FDI projects in West Midlands (#)	18 projects	2nd
	Indian - origin jobs created (#)	2,678 jobs	2nd
	West Midlands exports to India (£ million)	£318m	5th
Innovation, Education and Skills	Indian higher education student enrolments in West Midlands (#)	5,390 students	4th
Tourism and Connectivity	Indian tourist visitors to West Midlands (#)	47,000 visitors	3rd
	Indian tourist spend in West Midlands (£ million)	£40m	4th
	Direct flight routes	2 direct flights	2nd
	Residents of Indian ethnic origin	185,000 people	2nd

Note: Figures for FDI and jobs are for 2016-20 cumulative; tourist visitors and spend are the annual average 2017-2019; Indian resident figures are from the 2011 census; all others are 2019 annual figures – including exports for which 2020 performance was anomalous at £233 million, while still ranking 5th. All data applies to the West Midlands region (NUTS1) unless otherwise specified.

Through Birmingham's hosting of the Commonwealth Games in 2022, the West Midlands has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to promote its offer to India and the wider world. By leveraging our £23.9m Business and Tourism Programme, we have the chance to showcase the West Midlands as a world-class destination for tourism, trade and investment.

### 3.2 Trade and investment

**Inward Investment:**

The West Midlands has outperformed all regions (other than the South East) in attracting Indian FDI over the last decade.

With 76 recorded Indian FDI investments, worth over £3.5bn total<sup>10</sup>, this has created 13,276 jobs and safeguarded 1,610 more (accounting for 20% of all FDI-generated jobs<sup>11</sup>).

While absolute values have declined in the last five years due to the importance of Tata's early investments in JLR, the region has maintained 2nd place and attracted more Indian FDI<sup>12</sup> by value in 2020 than even the South East, receiving 57% of all Indian investment (worth £163.2 million).

The region's FDI success has been driven by *Future Mobility*, ranking 1st for Indian FDI over the last five years (2016-2020).

Performance across other LIS priority growth areas has been mixed, as illustrated in the figure below. Taken together, there is huge potential to scale-up.

Indian FDI to the West Midlands in Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) priority areas

LIS priority	Value (£ million)	English region ranking (of 8)
Future Mobility	£414m	1
Creative Technologies	£21.8m	2
Data-driven Healthcare	£0.2m	7
Modern Services	£0.5m	4
Net Zero	-	-

Note: Net Zero is a cross-cutting theme, and a key focus for the above sectors, particularly Future Mobility.



**Based on this, our Strategy has identified five key opportunity areas relating to investment.**

‘Stronger together’ **investment** opportunities:



**Future Mobility:**

The West Midlands can drive its advantage in Future Mobility and electrification, focusing on OEMs and their suppliers wanting to innovate and access the UK customer base in EVs and increasingly Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs).



**Creative Technologies:**

The region is punching well above its weight in attracting Indian FDI in Creative Tech, with strong potential for increasing two-way investment, targeting Indian HQs and scale-ups, across IT services, digitalisation of manufacturing, gaming, and pioneering use of AR, VR and 5G.



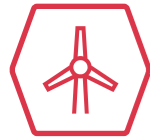
**Data-driven Healthcare:**

While its offer is strong and the pandemic creates opportunities, the West Midlands’ success in attracting data-driven healthcare FDI in nascent, requiring an R&D and partnership-focused approach.



**Modern Services:**

The West Midlands has significant potential to increase FDI in Modern Services, targeting Business Professional and Financial Services (BPFS) firms seeking lower-cost UK HQs (as an alternative to the South East) and ProfTech innovators.



**Net Zero:**

The West Midlands has world-leading capabilities in low and net zero carbon innovation, particularly in electrification. It can be a key FDI differentiator across all sectors, with opportunities to attract firms wishing to innovate and established players wanting to ‘plug and play’ at scale in the UK’s low carbon and net zero ecosystem.

**Trade:**

Along with the whole of the UK, given its potential, the West Midlands is underperforming in advanced manufacturing exports to India. This creates significant value opportunities for the region’s high-technology Industry 4.0 innovations, products and services.

While data is limited<sup>13</sup>, complementary strengths in Creative, Tech and Modern services also creates potential to increase two-way trade in Professional Business Services and ICT – exporting leading-edge digital technologies and high value knowledge and skills.

**We have identified two key opportunity areas relating to trade for WMIP to take forward, working collaboratively with others, as part of this Strategy:**

‘Stronger together’ **trade** opportunities:



**Advanced manufacturing goods:**

While Make in India will limit longer-term opportunities, there are high value short to medium-term opportunities to increase exports in transport equipment and Industry 4.0 technologies, including machinery, electrical machinery, optical equipment, power electronics, industrial automation and autonomous systems.



**Creative Technologies:**

Indian demand and capabilities align well with the West Midlands’, with strong potential to grow two-way trade in IT services, professional and business services and low carbon, and exports in Industrial Internet of Things (IIOT), AR, VR and AI.

**3.3**

**Innovation, education and skills**

**Innovation:**

With a proven track record of successful collaboration between its universities, businesses and wider innovation ecosystem, the West Midlands has an outstanding innovation offer for India.

Innovation partnerships have the potential to increase exponentially in growth areas such as 5G, cleantech and low carbon, Industry 4.0 and digitalisation, smart cities and IoT, healthcare and MedTech, AI, VR and AR.

Indian companies are also driving direct R&D investment and innovation within the West Midlands, particularly in the area of Future Mobility and electrification. Our Strategy has therefore identified three key opportunity areas relating to innovation:

‘Stronger together’ **innovation** opportunities



**Undertaking R&D collaborations to commercialise innovation in shared priority areas**

including through accessing UK and Indian innovation grants, challenge funds and exchanges.



**Attracting R&D intensive FDI by Indian corporates and their suppliers**

focusing on the largest R&D spenders in Future Mobility and Data-driven Healthcare, and working with existing Indian investors and their suppliers.



**West Midlands’ companies undertaking more R&D in India**

particularly in Creative Tech.



**Education and Skills:**

Between 2018-2019 and 2019-20, Indian student enrolments in the region more than doubled to over 5,000.

Over each of the last five years, the West Midlands has been the third most popular region for Indian student enrolments after London and the East of England, with four West Midlands universities featuring in the top 20 for Indian student enrolment in 2019/20.

Indian businesses also have high demand for specialist vocational and executive education which the region's universities are well-placed to supply.

In the longer-term, India's NEP should create direct opportunities for the West Midlands' universities to serve students in India.

We have identified three key opportunity areas relating to education and skills for WMIP to take forward, working closely with other stakeholders in the region and in India, as part of this new Strategy:

'Stronger together' **education and skills** opportunities



**Increasing Indian higher education student numbers**

in the region following the introduction of the Graduate Route post-study work visa, and building on the region's strengths in STEM, its strong job market and diaspora.



**Partnering with Indian training institutions**

and businesses to develop and deliver specialist and executive training in the region.



**Developing strategic partnerships with Indian universities**

to serve Indian higher education students and advocate for NEP policy clarity.

3.4

**Tourism and connectivity**

**Tourism:**

Indian visitors are more likely to spend time in the West Midlands than other international visitors. The region ranks third among English regions for Indian visits and nights spent, and fourth for visitor spend.

As the UK's fourth most valuable MICE market (worth £52m p.a), India is also a major source of business tourism.

Research has further identified that while Indian tourists rate the West Midlands highly as a destination, their awareness of its many visitor attractions is limited. This has contributed to the relatively low visitor spend in the region.

In addition, Birmingham Airport is the only UK airport outside London with direct flights to India. Demand for Air India's direct flights to/ from Birmingham and Delhi and Amritsar was rising rapidly prior to the pandemic. This includes business class travel which grew by 56% between 2015-2018.

Our Strategy has identified three key opportunity areas relating to tourism, connectivity and raising our tourism profile:

'Stronger together' **tourism and connectivity** opportunities



**Raising the West Midlands profile as a tourist destination**

and increasing leisure spend among Indians staying with family and friends or visiting on business.



**Working with VisitBritain**

to make the UK and West Midlands a more attractive market for Indian tourists.



**Increasing direct flight capacity**

between the West Midlands and India, including a direct route between Birmingham and Mumbai.



# 4.

## Recommendations and call to action

- 4.1 The West Midlands: The Beating Heart of the UK-India Relationship
- 4.2 Growing the West Midlands – India Science and Education Partnership
- 4.3 A Win-Win Trade and Investment Opportunity
- 4.4 Team West Midlands: A Partnership Approach to Sustained Engagement with India
- 4.5 Birmingham 2022: Strengthening the West Midlands – India Relationship

## The West Midlands is an innovation powerhouse with a unique, strong economic and cultural relationship with India that differentiates it from all other UK regions.

This includes a 'living bridge' of nearly 200,000 ethnic Indians, and its FDI footprint.

The analysis summarised in Section Three highlights a wide range of high-value opportunities for the WMIP to help stimulate mutually beneficial economic outcomes.

This section proposes five ambitious and actionable recommendations to pursue these opportunities, delivered through partnerships.

In most cases, the WMIP - as a special purpose vehicle - will deliver impact through promotion, partnership building and coordination, with WMIP members and other partners leading delivery.

## 4.1

### RECOMMENDATION ONE

## The West Midlands: The Beating Heart of the UK-India Relationship

### Promoting the region as being central to the 'living bridge' between the UK and India; a top destination for Indian tourists; and increasing direct connectivity between India and Birmingham Airport.

The West Midlands should build on its unique, strong economic and social relationship with India to position itself as the beating heart of the 'living bridge' between the UK and India.

This can be a springboard for increased tourism and connectivity between India and the region, building on its diaspora of nearly 200,000 ethnic Indians and its rich Indian culture.

Other drivers include the region's significant Indian student population, frequent direct flights between Birmingham and India, and the region already being a premier location for Indian investment and innovation.

Although the UK is losing market share, India's outbound tourism market is set to grow. Within the UK, the West Midlands has a compelling offer for Indian tourists, but visitor spend in the region is relatively low. The Commonwealth Games will provide a unique opportunity to develop and promote the region's leisure and business tourism offer to India, and make the case for more direct flights in the lead up to the Games and beyond.

**Promoting the West Midlands as a top Indian tourist destination through a *Visit West Midlands Campaign: Working through the BATP and with partners including VisitBritain, the WMIP can help develop and implement a Visit the West Midlands campaign targeted at Indian tourists which could include the following elements to deliver impact:***

- Building 'wow' into marketing, focusing on amazing events, places and experiences for Indians. Draw on visitor analysis - including interest in the outdoors and canals, the cultural offer (food, museum connections, cricket, and other sports), and the importance of the experience economy for younger travellers.
- Targeting Indian regions that have a strong diaspora connection with the region, including the Punjab, and those that account for most tourists, including Maharashtra and the NCR.
- Working with multipliers and agents, including major operators in India and in the region. With pandemic restrictions making marketing challenging in 2021 (and possibly beyond), there is an opportunity to engage regional tourist operators serving the local diaspora, including through developing bespoke visit programmes and suggested itineraries.

### Recommendations and call to action

- Targeting large-scale and high-profile business events and conferences aligned to the West Midlands' strengths. For example, Tech Conferences Europe Event or E Sport Conferences linked to the Commonwealth Games, and Silicon Spa's gaming cluster.
- Advocating to make it more cost-effective and easier to travel to the UK, focusing on visas and air traveller duty, using the Schengen area as a benchmark.

**Increasing direct air connectivity between India and the West Midlands through a *Commonwealth Connectivity Campaign: working with (and through) regional partners, the WMIP can help build the case for more direct flights and routes to and from India as an important enabler of tourism and business. This would be achieved through:***

- Resuming the frequency of direct flights directly between Birmingham Airport and Delhi and Amritsar, following the pandemic.
- Given its importance for leisure and business tourists, introducing a direct route between Birmingham and Mumbai. The Commonwealth Games will provide an unmissable opportunity to build the commercial case and trial a new route.
- Working with new, lower-cost Indian or regional providers to fly direct to Birmingham Airport, or via the Gulf or EU. This would highlight the Airport's low cost compared to Heathrow, and the region's outstanding UK connectivity.

## 4.2

### RECOMMENDATION TWO

## Growing the West Midlands - India Science and Education Partnership

### Driving innovation through accelerating R&D collaboration with India on shared challenges; positioning the West Midlands as India's number one innovation partner in the UK; and attracting outstanding Indian talent (both academic and professional) to study in the region.

Central to the region's offer to India, innovation is set to drive both the West Midlands' and India's future growth. The region is already a hub for Indian innovation, particularly in electrification, and can position itself as India's number one innovation partner.

By scaling and leveraging its university offer, business partnerships, G2G R&D initiatives, and wider innovation ecosystem, the region can demonstrate how two-way economic benefits (as a precursor to high value FDI and exports) can be developed.

Moreover, India's booming international student numbers, UK policy changes, and Indian demand, create a moment-in-time opportunity to ramp-up Indian higher education student numbers and deliver more specialist business skills and executive training to Indian professionals.

To pursue these opportunities, it is recommended that the West Midlands positions itself as the number one innovation partner for India, and develops a *Study West Midlands* campaign:

**Positioning the West Midlands as India's number one Science & Innovation Partner and accelerating R&D collaborations on shared challenges:**

- Innovation is integral to the region's offer to India, and R&D activities can make an important contribution to the region's productivity (and act as a precursor to FDI and trade).
- Efforts should build on the success of the Future Mobility sector (focused on electrification and net zero) and extend this to Data-Driven Healthcare which together account for over 60% of Indian R&D spend.
- In doing so, the region should target the top 26 Indian R&D spenders, and work with existing Indian OEM and Tier 1 FDI investors to attract Indian-based high-technology firms and potential suppliers to undertake R&D in the region (through collaborations and R&D-focused FDI).
- R&D collaborations can be further advanced through working with the region's universities, innovation organisations, and SMEs, alongside their Indian counterparts. A focus on applying advanced technologies (e.g. AI, VR, AR, electrification etc.) to tackle shared challenges, such as net zero, is recommended. Other sectors and specialisms to pursue include EVs, clean energy, low carbon manufacturing, smart cities and digital health. This strategy should also include identifying opportunities and forming partnerships to develop and access research grants, competitions and challenge funds.
- With existing resources, the WMIP should focus on promoting opportunities, convening partners and signposting through its innovation corridor initiatives.

**Developing a *Study West Midlands* offer to promote the region's universities to Indian higher education students and executives:**

- It is recommended that the West Midlands' universities develop a joined-up *Study West Midlands* promotional offer to capitalise on the boom in Indian higher education students and corporates seeking specialist professional and executive training.
- Focused on the region's academic and technology excellence (especially in STEM and executive education), its cultural offering, and its interconnectivity with business and high-quality employers, this would complement our universities' individual promotional and engagement activities.

**Growing the West Midlands – India Science and Education Partnership – key enablers**

**The following key elements could help *Study West Midlands* deliver impact:**

- Student profiling and targeting, including building on the 'living bridge' through focusing on the Punjab and other regions with a strong cultural connection to the region.
- Institution collaborations, including using scholarships, exchanges and other mechanisms to raise the profile and buzz around studying in the West Midlands.
- A flagship internship initiative, offering internships and post-study graduate schemes to Indian students - increasing the attractiveness of the region's offer and benefiting local firms through access to highly skilled graduates.
- Establishing an Indian-West Midlands alumni network, with annual virtual or physical events – for example, via fringe events linked to the end of the 75th Anniversary of Independence celebrations in 2022, and Indian-specific Commonwealth Games opportunities.
- Promoting the region as a global centre for innovation-focused vocational training and executive education, linked with the Visit West Midlands campaign (see Recommendation 4).
- Learning lessons from the 10 UK universities that have been most successful in attracting Indian students.



## RECOMMENDATION THREE

### A Win-Win Trade and Investment Opportunity

**Working with India to increase two-way trade and investment through an integrated approach; establishing more dynamic corridor partnerships; being a leading enabler of India's Industry 4.0 aspirations; and positioning the West Midlands as the UK location of choice to fulfil India's global innovation ambitions.**

The West Midlands is already the largest UK recipient of Indian FDI outside the South East. Building on this success, and the region's outstanding FDI offer, it can scale up high-value Indian FDI across the region's Local Industrial Strategy priority areas.

In tandem, the region's firms can benefit from investment in India as it seeks to become a global manufacturing hub through *Make in India*.

Increasing such two-way investment will deliver immense value for both the West Midlands and India through generating economic output, creating high-quality jobs, accessing new markets, boosting innovation, and driving productivity.

There are also significant opportunities to scale-up advanced manufacturing exports and two-way trade in services where there is significant synergy between India and the West Midlands. This will deliver economic value through increased revenues, productivity and job creation.

Through an integrated trade and investment campaign, it is recommended that the West Midlands positions itself as India's number one FDI partner and as an enabler of India's Industry 4.0 ambitions. This to be underpinned by support for the development of innovation corridors linking the West Midlands to specific Indian regions and cities:

**Positioning the West Midlands as India's number one FDI partner for innovation and economic globalisation: this targeted innovation-led promotional campaign should be framed around how the West Midlands and India can help each other achieve their growth ambitions.**

**Key themes should include:**

- Targeting the opportunities identified in Section 3 of the Strategy, with company profiling and account management, largely delivered through the corridor initiatives with Maharashtra/Pune and Telangana/Hyderabad.
- Investing to Innovate – profiling the region's world-class innovation offer and differentiators, including the depth and breadth of its innovation ecosystem, its net zero electrification and its digitalisation offer. This to sit alongside the promotion of specific investment opportunities, leveraging the region's FDI High Potential Opportunities in healthcare, mobility and gaming.
- Going Global from the West Midlands – positioning the region as the pre-eminent UK location for Indian scale-ups wanting to expand globally and large corporates' UK HQs. To include the West Midlands' differentiators over London and work with DIT - and regional stakeholders - on soft landing support for SMEs (such as incubation, office space and other business support services).
- Aligning with India's growth priorities, including *Make in India*, and its strategic economic development organisations and initiatives. Include shared marketing programmes with *Invest India* and other partners to promote two-way trade and investment and explore and trial joint 'wrap around' market entry and investment support for high potential companies looking to expand and grow in their respective territories.

**Promoting West Midlands' exporters as leading enablers of India's Industry 4.0 ambitions: this should focus on Industry 4.0 technologies and know-how, framed around achieving India's *Make in India* and net zero ambitions, and should include:**

- Targeting the opportunities identified in Section 3, where the region's advanced manufacturing, digital technologies and services capabilities can help Indian advanced manufacturers drive productivity and low carbon efficiencies.

**Developing innovation corridors between the West Midlands and the Maharashtra and Telangana regions:**

- The analysis of region-city cluster capabilities demonstrates a particularly strong alignment with several specific Indian regions. Of these, Maharashtra/Pune and Telangana/Hyderabad have a very strong sectoral fit and are neither too large (nor too saturated with competing initiatives).
- It is recommended that the West Midlands develops multi-faceted innovation corridors with these regions, framed around helping each other innovate to achieve their growth ambitions through investment, trade, R&D and skills.
- With Maharashtra-Pune, the initial focus should be on re-invigorating and expanding the Midlands-Maharashtra Mobility Corridor and exploring cooperation on Creative Tech.
- For Telangana-Hyderabad, the focus should be on Data-driven Healthcare and Creative Tech.
- The respective regions' innovation organisations and programmes will be key stakeholders, alongside businesses, business organisations, universities, and civic bodies.

### A Win-Win Trade and Investment Opportunity – key enablers

**These integrated campaigns should be implemented initially through the BAMP and aligned with the GREAT campaign. Common themes and approaches to explore could include:**

- Developing inspirational initiatives to motivate and inspire action. For example, UK-India Export Champions, Investment Conferences, Mayoral awards, and high-profile competitions.
- Promotion and B2B matchmaking within the West Midlands and India through roadshows, trade missions (virtual and physical where possible), trade shows, other events and high-level visits.
- Strengthening and leveraging the 'living bridge' - through establishing a West Midlands-India business network and partnering with existing Indian investors to attract their Indian suppliers to invest and innovate in the West Midlands.
- Collaborating with UK and Indian business associations on delivery, including NASSCOM, FICCI, CII, UKIBC, regional bodies, and others.
- Integrating with wider R&D and ideally skills cooperation (see Recommendation 3).

## RECOMMENDATION FOUR

### Team West Midlands: A Partnership Approach to Sustained Engagement with India

**Increasing and enhancing the region's collective engagement with India to increase our impact. More specifically, investing in the WMIP to deliver more sustained, mutually beneficial partnerships, and more shared economic outcomes.**

India is a vast and complex country, and its business culture places great importance on relationships and trust.

With existing resources, maximising impact will require a strategic and coordinated approach to increasing the West Midlands' profile within India and facilitating sustained and productive partnerships.

Working with regional and Indian stakeholders, the WMIP can be instrumental in achieving this through its promotion and partnering activities - leveraging the B ATP and wider UK-India bilateral opportunities.

Developing truly complementary and long-term region-city partnerships will be an important enabler within this context, especially considering the intense competition which exists to secure and sustain a high quality, constructive and meaningful dialogue with India.

**It is recommended that the WMIP delivers this through:**

**Increasing the West Midlands profile in India and growing the WMIP:**

- The WMIP has a critical role to play in generating and sustaining the visibility and partnerships needed to realise the potential of an enhanced relationship with India.
- Launched during the pandemic, the WMIP has achieved impressive impact with existing resources. This Strategy outlines a refreshed and reinvigorated approach, and new, bolder recommendations, for pursuing high-value two-way opportunities.
- But it is vital that the region's stakeholders continue to support, develop and grow the partnership with multi-year funding beyond the life of the B ATP if the region is to reap its share of the economic dividend of enhanced cultural cooperation and commercial collaboration.



## RECOMMENDATION FIVE

### Birmingham 2022: Strengthening the West Midlands – India Relationship

**Maximising our impact, and forging new West Midlands-India relationships, by leveraging the Commonwealth Games; its parallel Business and Tourism Programme; and the India-UK 2030 Roadmap.**

In hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2022, the world's spotlight will shine on the UK and the West Midlands. With 1.5 billion people expected to tune in to watch the games, and 27,000 international visitors, the £23.9m Business and Tourism Programme (B ATP) will be a key vehicle for promoting the region to India and the world, delivering supporting activities that will unlock enormous economic potential.

Together with the *India-UK 2030 Roadmap*, which outlines partnership initiatives that are closely aligned to the West Midlands strengths, this presents an extraordinary opportunity to pursue mutually beneficial outcomes in the lead up to 2022 and beyond.

It is recommended that the WMIP maximises the impact of these initiatives on West Midlands – India outcomes through:

- Driving economic outcomes through the Commonwealth Games' Business and Tourism Programme (B ATP): It is recommended that India is prioritised within the B ATP, and that the WMIP works closely with the B ATP delivery team - and partners - to maximise the impact on West Midlands-India outcomes. The WMIP, through its local and Indian partners and networks, is particularly well-placed to drive promotional and partnership-building activities through the B ATP, including developing and promoting India-specific initiatives
- Becoming a leading partner within the enhanced India-UK bilateral relationship outlined in the *India-UK 2030 Roadmap*: the WMIP can play a key role in engaging with the most relevant UK-India bilateral initiatives, promoting the region's interests, and disseminating opportunities amongst regional stakeholders.

The five-year WMIP Strategy provides an evidence base and plan for WMIP's strategic activities over the coming years which is both ambitious and achievable.

It is based on leveraging the West Midlands' outstanding assets and, crucially, its pre-existing strong economic and cultural ties with India, in areas that are directly aligned to India's interests, aspirations and priorities.

We have developed a series of ambitious aspirational impact targets for the Strategy, based on our research and consultation with key stakeholders, and these are outlined on the next page.

Increasing West Midlands – India Cooperation: Aspirational Impact Targets

Theme	Baseline			Aspirational targets		
	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline data	Years(s) / time period for baseline	Year 5 aspiration	Value uplift over baseline	
Trade and Investment	Indian - origin FDI value in West Midlands (£ million)	£457m	2016-2020 cumulative	£557m	£100m	
	Indian - origin FDI projects in West Midlands (#)	18 projects	2016-2020 cumulative	25 projects	7 projects	
	Indian - origin jobs created (#)	2,678 jobs	2016-2020 cumulative	3,178 jobs	500 jobs	
	West Midlands exports to India (£ million)	£318m	2019 per annum	£418m	£100m	
Innovation, Education and Skills	Indian higher education student enrolments in West Midlands (#)	5,390 students	2019-20 per annum	10,390 students	5,000 students	
Tourism and Connectivity	Indian tourist visitors to West Midlands (#)	47,000 visitors	2017-19 average per annum	57,000 visitors	10,000 visitors	
	Indian tourist spend in West Midlands (£ million)	£40m	2017-19 average per annum	£50m	£10m	
	Direct flight routes	2 flights	2019	3 flights	1 flight	

Note: Aspirational targets were derived through a combination of modelled growth rates based on historical trends, growth trajectories/s and the policy environment, agreed with WMGC experts.

In most cases, the WMIP’s role in the delivery of the Strategy’s targets will be one of promotion and facilitation, with other partners leading delivery.

With robust implementation and sufficient resource, the WMIP strategy can make a significant and transformational economic contribution to the West Midlands, the wider UK, and to India itself.

The Strategy cannot be delivered by the WMIP alone.

Rather, successful implementation will require a concerted, targeted and collaborative effort by a diverse stakeholder group in the West Midlands who, in turn, will need to collaborate effectively with their counterparts in India.

Achieving this is a significant challenge, but the prize is worth it.

And, as the UK and India focus relentlessly on rebuilding quickly and sustainably following the pandemic, it offers a clear and unequivocal opportunity to demonstrate we genuinely are *Stronger Together*.

Whether from business, civil society, academia or government, we encourage you to get involved. You can make an important contribution, however big or small, to increasing cooperation with India and supporting economic growth and job creation in both the West Midlands and India.

### About West Midlands India Partnership



Through the West Midlands India Partnership we aim to enhance UK-India relations and boost trade & investment, connectivity and partnerships between the West Midlands and India. The Partnership aims to support the region’s long-term economic growth plans by developing stronger links and opportunities for collaboration as part of a five-year programme of activity with the Indian market.

The WMIP builds on India’s strong track record of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the West Midlands, acting as a single point-of-contact for potential new investors. The region’s strong business offer has already attracted some of India’s biggest companies to our region, including Tata Motors, State Bank of India, Infosys, OLA, Enzen Global, Suprajit Group, Elder Pharmaceuticals and more recently, Microland.

For further details on the West Midlands India Partnership, please contact:



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India Partnership Director

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## Team West Midlands: A Partnership Approach to Sustained Engagement with India

The West Midlands India Partnership Strategy document is founded upon extensive consultation and discussion across the membership and regional leadership. The strategy has benefited from the initiative and hard work of the West Midlands India Partnership’s Members, the West Midlands Growth Company, PwC, the UK India Business Council, and stakeholders from a range of diverse organisations who have come together to ensure all key elements are captured in the document. Consistent participation and active engagement from all representatives at multiple planning and execution workshops was instrumental in the development of the plan.

The West Midlands India Partnership acknowledges the contribution of all involved representatives and expresses sincere gratitude for the key role they have played in shaping this strategy document. Stronger ties with India will be achieved by WMIP facilitating the close working of all key stakeholders within the West Midlands and India to achieve the vision of ‘stronger together’.

## Executive Board Members of the West Midlands India Partnership

Dr. Jason Wouhra (Lioncraft Trading Ltd.)	Rohit Singh (UK India Business Council)
Dr. Shashank Vikram (Consulate of India Birmingham)	Anil Puri (Purico Ltd.)
Neil Rami (West Midlands Growth Company)	Sanjay Pandey (State Bank of India UK)
Roger Mendonca (West Midlands Growth Company)	Trevor Ivory (DLA Piper LLP)
Daniel Storer (West Midlands Growth Company)	Ninder Johal (Nachural)
Matthew Hammond (Pricewaterhousecoopers LLP)	Lakshmi Koul (Confederation of Indian Industry)
Arif Ahmad (Pricewaterhousecoopers LLP)	Prof. Robin Mason (University of Birmingham)
David Armstrong (Pricewaterhousecoopers LLP)	Prof. Julian Beer (Birmingham City University)
Stephen Page (Pricewaterhousecoopers LLP)	Laura Demetris (British High Commission Mumbai)
Phil Brown (Pricewaterhousecoopers LLP)	Ian Harrison (Department for International Trade)
Shreena Sidhu (Pricewaterhousecoopers LLP)	Gunjan Sharma (UK India Business Council)
Kevin McCole (UK India Business Council)	Manish Verma (UK India Business Council)
	Shivraj Chaudhary (UK India Business Council)



## Appendix

### Section 2

<sup>1</sup> WTO, WTS 2020

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, How much does your country invest in R&D

<sup>3</sup> Invest India, June 2021

<sup>4</sup> With assets over £21.6m (US\$30 million)

<sup>5</sup> Visit Britain, India Market and Trade Profile, April 2021

<sup>6</sup> ResearchandMarkets.com, India Outbound Tourism Market Analysis 2014-2019 & 2020-2026, 2020

<sup>7</sup> Visit Britain, India Market and Trade Profile, April 2021

### Section 3

<sup>8</sup> See Data Annex Figure 12 for FDI per year since 2011

<sup>9</sup> WMGC Monitoring

<sup>10</sup> See Data Annex Figure 13 for graphs showing FDI by sector

<sup>11</sup> Services trade data is not available at the regional level





**West Midlands  
India Partnership**

**Stronger Together**

[westmidlands-india.com](http://westmidlands-india.com)  
[wmgrowth.com](http://wmgrowth.com)  
[investwm.co.uk](http://investwm.co.uk)



**West Midlands  
Growth Company**

**UK INDIA**  
BUSINESS COUNCIL



**pwc**