

West Midlands Case Study

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UK Context

■ **Labour market**

- UK economic performance “relatively strong”, but now faltering
- flexible labour market
- challenge of linking residents to jobs (in some areas)

■ **Skills**

- relatively poor record of skills formation in the UK compared with many other countries
- particular concern about the ‘long tail of low skills’

■ **Regional and local**

scales - greater emphasis than formerly on the regional and sub-regional dimension of economic and skills policy

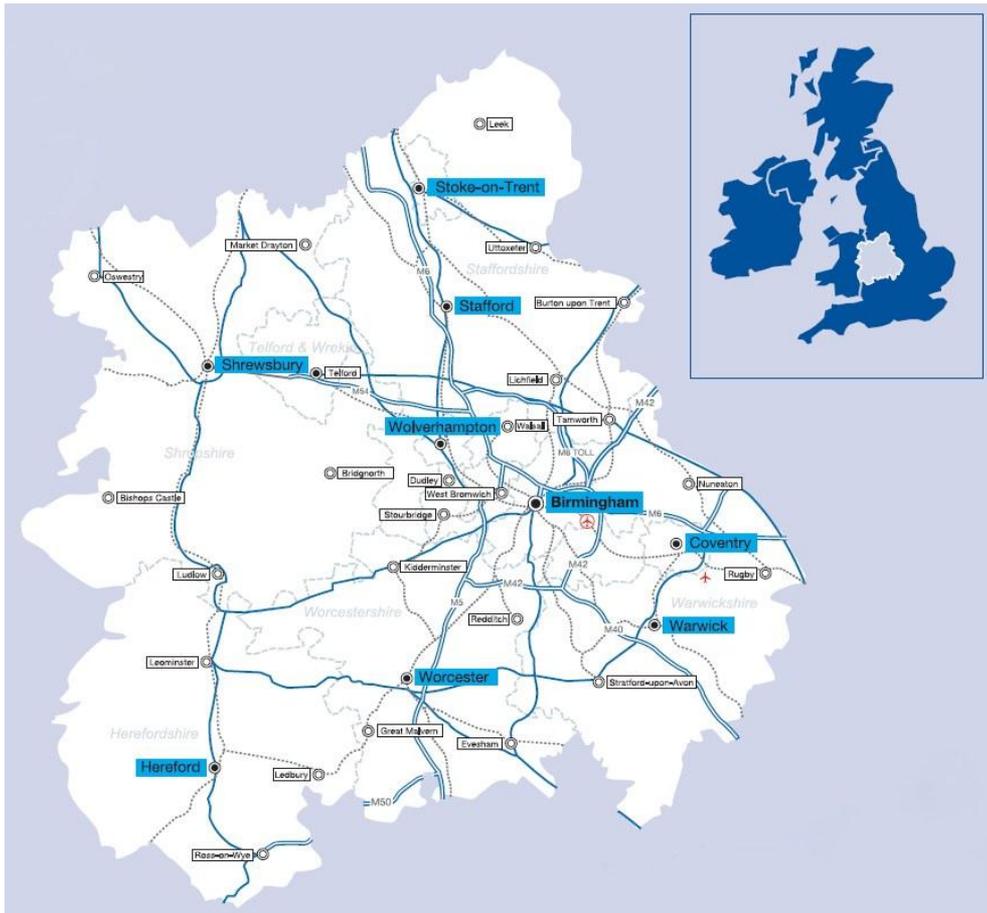
- skills development linked more explicitly to regional and local economic development
- importance of regional and local levels for policy implementation

■ **Partnership working**

■ **Dynamism**

■ **Complexity**

West Midlands (1)



- City region of 2.75 million people – Birmingham and the Black Country
- Former manufacturing heartland of England
- Birmingham as the regional service centre
- Pockets of severe deprivation in inner city areas – especially amongst some ethnic minority groups

West Midlands (2)

- **Vision:**
“In 2020 the City Region will have high levels of personal prosperity, business success and population growth equal to those in the South East of England with every individual realising his or her full potential...”
- economic competitiveness and social inclusion
- high technology corridors – higher value added
- **INFORMATION-LED approach to strategy:**
 - Regional Skills Assessment
 - Skills Performance Index
 - sectoral, occupational and thematic studies
- **Foci:**
 - employers’ strategic skills needs (e.g. management and leadership, skills for innovation)
 - upskilling of those in work
 - addressing cycles of social and economic deprivation, low aspirations and limited opportunities

West Midlands (3)

- ***Regional Skills Partnership*** - provides leadership and direction

- *Regional Skills Team* – provides supporting information

- **PARTNERSHIP WORKING** lies at the heart of strategy design

- Regional Development Agency
- Regional Government Office
- Learning and Skills Council
- Sector Skills Councils
- Jobcentre Plus
- local authorities
- Higher education
- Further education
- Business Links
- Employer networks
- Voluntary and community sector

West Midlands (4)

City Strategy Pathfinder

- close gap between city region employment rate and that of disadvantaged wards
- increase skills levels of individuals in target wards so that they can sustain and progress in employment
- progressive system of pre and post employment support to ensure a *continuum/skills escalator*
- Integrated Employment and Skills System matching the job and skills requirements of employers with programmes to assist workless individuals

