

# **Sandwell Annual Economic Review 2024**

**January 2025**



## Our Measures of Success - The Black Country Performance Management Framework

In the Black Country we will:	Where we are now		Change over the last year <sup>1</sup>		Direction of Travel Relative to National Average since 2004		Scale of the Challenge (To reach England where applicable)	
<b>Grow our Population and Reverse Net Outward Migration Particularly to Environs</b>	DUD	326,680	DUD	+1,749 (+0.5%)	DUD	+20,509 (+6.7%)		
	SAN	347,551	SAN	+2,969 (+0.9%)	SAN	+58,702 (+20.3%)		
	WAL	288,736	WAL	+2,518 (+0.9%)	WAL	+32,034 (+12.5%)		
	WOL	272,425	WOL	+4,537 (+1.7%)	WOL	+31,858 (+13.2%)		
	BC	1,235,395	BC	+11,773 (+1.0% BC) +1.0% Eng.	BC	+143,103 (+13.1% BC) +14.9% Eng.		
<b>Raise Incomes</b>	DUD	£34,909	DUD	+£3,294 (+10.4%)	DUD	+£15,718 (+81.9%)	DUD	+£2,708
	SAN	£31,915	SAN	+£2,154 (+7.2%)	SAN	+£13,206 (70.6%)	SAN	+£5,702
	WAL	£32,624	WAL	+£2,144 (+7.0%)	WAL	+£13,946 (+74.7%)	WAL	+£4,993
	WOL	£33,205	WOL	+£2,730 (+9.0%)	WOL	+£14,640 (+78.9%)	WOL	+£4,412
	BC	£33,163 (avg.)	BC	+£2,581 (+8.4% BC) +6.9% Eng.	BC	+£14,378 (+76.5% BC) +67.6% Eng.	BC	+£4,454 Eng.: £37,617
<b>Achieve Better Population Balance</b>	DUD	17.0%			DUD	-0.1pp	DUD	+16,257
	SAN	10.8%			SAN	0pp	SAN	+36,179
	WAL	13.7%			WAL	-0.5pp	WAL	+22,370
	WOL	13.4%			WOL	-0.3pp	WOL	+21,620
	BC	13.6%			BC	-0.3pp BC +0.5pp Eng.	BC	+96,427 Eng.: 23.5% AB's
<b>Transform the Environment</b>	70.5% of residents satisfied with Black Country as a place to live						77.8% resident satisfaction	
<b>Regenerated Our Economy (pp = percentage points)</b>								
<b>Reduce the Output Gap</b>	DUD	£5.1bn	DUD	+£427m	DUD	+£2.8bn	DUD	-£5.1bn
	SAN	£4.9bn	SAN	+£608m	SAN	+£3.4bn	SAN	-£4.9bn
	WAL	£4.6bn	WAL	+£479m	WAL	+£2.6bn	WAL	-£4.6bn
	WOL	£3.0bn	WOL	+£227m	WOL	+£1.9bn	WOL	-£3.0bn
	BC	£17.7bn	BC	+£1.7bn	BC	+£10.7bn	BC	-£17.7bn
<b>Raise the Number of Local Jobs</b>	DUD	111,000	DUD	+1,000 (+0.9%)	DUD	-7,000 (-5.9%)		
	SAN	127,000	SAN	+1,000 (+0.8%)	SAN	+4,000 (+3.3%)		
	WAL	99,000	WAL	-3,000 (-2.9%)	WAL	+5,000 (+5.3%)		
	WOL	110,000	WOL	+1,000 (+0.9%)	WOL	+6,000 (+5.8%)		
	BC	447,000	BC	0 (0% BC) +1.3% Eng.	BC	+8,000 (+1.8% BC) +19.2% Eng.		
<b>Increase the Total Employment Rate</b>	DUD	75.9%	DUD	-0.6pp	DUD	+2.9pp	DUD	Above England
	SAN	67.4%	SAN	+2.0pp	SAN	+3.0pp	SAN	+17,326
	WAL	76.0%	WAL	+4.3pp	WAL	+7.6pp	WAL	Above England
	WOL	62.6%	WOL	-3.8pp	WOL	-6.2pp	WOL	+21,197
	BC	70.6%	BC	+0.6pp BC -0.1pp Eng.	BC	+1.9pp BC +2.8pp Eng.	BC	+37,495 Eng.: 75.7%
<b>Increase the Percentage of Knowledge Workers</b>	DUD	44.1%	DUD	-5.9pp	DUD		DUD	+14,108
	SAN	30.5%	SAN	-3.9pp	SAN		SAN	+33,445
	WAL	35.5%	WAL	-1.5pp	WAL		WAL	+24,740
	WOL	53.3%	WOL	+15.7pp	WOL		WOL	+94
	BC	40.0%	BC	-0.1pp BC +0.9pp Eng.	BC		BC	+72,387 Eng.: 53.4%
<b>Raise Enterprise Births</b>	DUD	1,145	DUD	-245 (-17.6%)	DUD	-45 (-3.8%)	DUD	+451 P.A.
	SAN	1,540	SAN	-95 (-5.8%)	SAN	+600 (+63.8%)	SAN	+158 P.A.
	WAL	1,310	WAL	+40 (+3.1%)	WAL	+265 (+25.4%)	WAL	+101 P.A.
	WOL	1,300	WOL	-210 (-13.9%)	WOL	+300 (+30.0%)	WOL	+31 P.A.
	BC	5,295	BC	-510 (-8.8%) -6.2% Eng.	BC	+1,120 (+26.8% BC) +13.4% Eng.	BC	+741 P.A. Eng.: 49 per 10,000 pop.
<b>Reduce the Percentage of Workless Households</b>	DUD	9.6%	DUD	-4,300 (-31.9%)	DUD	-6,500 (-41.4%)	DUD	Below England
	SAN	18.6%	SAN	0 (0%)	SAN	-400 (-2.1%)	SAN	-5,317
	WAL	10.6%	WAL	-6,300 (-42.3%)	WAL	-7,200 (-45.6%)	WAL	Below England
	WOL	18.1%	WOL	+1,100 (+8.0%)	WOL	-300 (-2.0%)	WOL	-3,827
	BC	14.3%	BC	-9,500 (-15.5%) +0.9% Eng.	BC	-14,500 (-21.9% BC) -14.6% Eng.	BC	-2,948 Eng.: 13.5%
<b>Increase the Number of Visitors to the Area</b>	33.66m		+61,000				A leading UK visitor destination	

In the Black Country we will:	Where we are now		Change over the last year <sup>1</sup>		Direction of Travel Relative to National Average since 2004		Scale of the Challenge (To reach England where applicable)	
<b>Sustainable Environmental Transformation</b>								
Increase the Hectares of Local Nature Reserves	887.3ha		0ha		-		1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 pop.	
Have a Sustainable Environment- Reduce CO <sup>2</sup> Emissions (Tonnes per capita)	DUD	3.1	DUD	-0.3	DUD	-3.2	Net Zero by 2041	
	SAN	3.6	SAN	-0.3	SAN	-4.2		
	WAL	3.4	WAL	-0.3	WAL	-3.7		
	WOL	3.2	WOL	-0.3	WOL	-3.7		
	BC	3.3	BC	-0.3 BC -0.3 Eng.	BC	-3.7 BC -4.4 Eng.		
<b>Raised Education and Skills</b>								
Reduce the Number of People with No Qualifications	DUD	4.5%	DUD	-2,300 (-21.1%)	DUD	-19,100 (-69.0%)	DUD	Below England
	SAN	11.8%	SAN	+1,900 (+8.5%)	SAN	-15,900 (-39.6%)	SAN	-11,545
	WAL	11.1%	WAL	+1,400 (+8.0%)	WAL	-12,700 (-40.1%)	WAL	-8,448
	WOL	11.7%	WOL	-1,400 (-7.1%)	WOL	-16,300 (-47.0%)	WOL	-8,640
	BC	9.7%	BC	-500 (-0.7% BC) -3.4% Eng.	BC	-64,100 (-47.7% BC) -54.3% Eng.	BC	-25,449 Eng.: 6.2%
Increase the Number of People with RQF4+	DUD	40.0%	DUD	+14,100 (+22.7%)	DUD	+37,100 (+95.1%)	DUD	+12,904
	SAN	31.2%	SAN	+19,600 (+43.8%)	SAN	+37,100 (+136.4%)	SAN	+32,044
	WAL	31.9%	WAL	-2,900 (-5.1%)	WAL	+26,400 (+94.6%)	WAL	+25,402
	WOL	40.8%	WOL	+12,400 (+23.9%)	WOL	+39,500 (+159.3%)	WOL	+9,419
	BC	35.7%	BC	+43,300 (+20.1% BC) +6.3% Eng.	BC	+140,200 (+118.0% BC) +99.1% Eng.	BC	+79,769 Eng.: 46.7%
Improve Pupils Progress 8 Score	DUD	-0.12	DUD	-0.11	DUD		DUD	Improve by 0.09
	SAN	-0.16	SAN	-0.09	SAN		SAN	Improve by 0.13
	WAL	-0.22	WAL	-0.02	WAL		WAL	Improve by 0.19
	WOL	-0.05	WOL	-0.03	WOL		WOL	Improve by 0.02
	BC	-0.14	BC	-0.04	BC		BC	Improve by 0.11 Eng.: -0.03
Reduce the No. of 16–17-Year-Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	DUD	7.4%	DUD	-61 (-9.7%)	DUD		DUD	-571
	SAN	1.9%	SAN	-5 (-2.7%)	SAN		SAN	-181
	WAL	3.4%	WAL	+55 (27.9%)	WAL		WAL	-252
	WOL	3.1%	WOL	+27 (+15.4%)	WOL		WOL	-202
	BC	3.9%	BC	+16 (+1.3% BC) +13.6% Eng.	BC		BC	No NEETs -1,206
<b>Transformed our Environmental Infrastructure</b>								
Increase Net New Homes	DUD	141,550	DUD	+743 (+0.5%)	DUD	+12,424 (+9.6%)	DUD	
	SAN	136,406	SAN	+647 (+0.5%)	SAN	+15,999 (+13.3%)	SAN	
	WAL	118,581	WAL	+388 (+0.3%)	WAL	+12,090 (+11.4%)	WAL	
	WOL	115,164	WOL	+722 (+0.6%)	WOL	+13,318 (+13.1%)	WOL	
	BC	511,701	BC	+2,500 (+0.5% BC) +0.9% Eng.	BC	+53,832 (+11.8% BC) +18.1% Eng.	BC	
Provide Industrial Floorspace	DUD	2,371,000 sqm	DUD	+15,000 sqm	DUD	-590,000 sqm	DUD	
	SAN	3,908,000 sqm	SAN	-2,000 sqm	SAN	-915,000 sqm	SAN	
	WAL	2,201,000 sqm	WAL	+25,000 sqm	WAL	-596,000 sqm	WAL	
	WOL	2,194,000 sqm	WOL	+9,000 sqm	WOL	-574,000 sqm	WOL	
	BC	10,674,000 sqm	BC	+47,000 sqm	BC	-2,675,000 sqm	BC	
Provide Office Floorspace	DUD	258,000 sqm	DUD	-1,000 sqm	DUD	-48,000 sqm	DUD	
	SAN	180,000 sqm	SAN	-2,000 sqm	SAN	-16,000 sqm	SAN	
	WAL	166,000 sqm	WAL	-4,000 sqm	WAL	-7,000 sqm	WAL	
	WOL	211,000 sqm	WOL	+1,000 sqm	WOL	-32,000 sqm	WOL	
	BC	815,000 sqm	BC	-6,000 sqm	BC	-103,000 sqm	BC	
Provide Retail Floorspace	DUD	598,000 sqm	DUD	-5,000 sqm	DUD	-20,000 sqm	DUD	
	SAN	564,000 sqm	SAN	-3,000 sqm	SAN	+71,000 sqm	SAN	
	WAL	507,000 sqm	WAL	-4,000 sqm	WAL	+39,000 sqm	WAL	
	WOL	501,000 sqm	WOL	-6,000 sqm	WOL	-28,000 sqm	WOL	
	BC	2,170,000 sqm	BC	-18,000 sqm	BC	+62,000 sqm	BC	

<sup>1</sup> The **green** shading illustrates those indicators where the Black Country moved in a positive direction of travel compared to the national average (excluding output gap where the latest change is shaded green due to the positive change and not compared to England), the **red** shading indicates the reverse and the **orange** indicates no change or a growth rate in the right direction but less than the national average growth rate. Please note for qualifications, RQF's have replaced NVQs, and caution should be used when comparing change over time. West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) provided the visitor economy figure for the Black Country via the STEAM model.

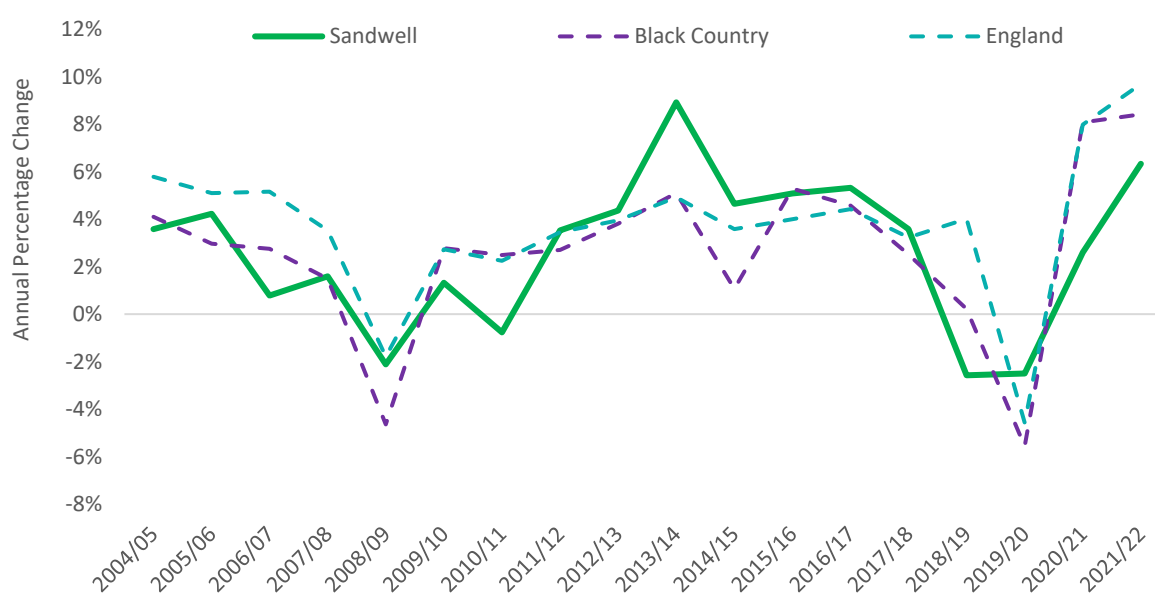
# 2024 KEY MESSAGES

## 1.1. Economy

### Economy and Productivity

- The Black Country has long-standing and complex socio-economic challenges, but data shows there has been some recovery from the recent years of economic shocks. **Sandwell's total Gross Value Added (GVA)<sup>2</sup> increased from £6.4bn in 2021 to £6.8bn in 2022.** Although, this equated to a slower growth than nationally at 6.3% compared to 9.7%. **However, national insights show that 2024 has been a difficult year for business and despite a strong start for the UK economy at the start of the year, growth fell in the second half.**

#### Annual Changes in Total GVA:



- Sandwell's GVA per head remains substantially lower than the national average at £19,750 compared to £33,976 in 2022.** There was an annual increase of 5.6% but was below the national growth rate (+8.6%). For Sandwell, there was an **overall output gap<sup>3</sup> of £4.9bn**, an annual increase of just over £608m and longer-term (since 2004) a significant increase of £3.4bn.
- GVA per hour worked<sup>4</sup> for Sandwell was £32.00 in 2022**, with a slower annual growth rate than nationally at 0.9% compared to 1.5%. Also, when compared to 2019, Sandwell performed behind the national average growth rate (+5.3% vs +8.5%). In 2022 there was a **shortfall of £7.70 to reach the UK average (£39.70).**
- Sandwell's Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head increased from £14,547 in 2021 to £15,305 in 2022**, which equated to a **growth of 5.2%**, slightly below the national growth rate of 5.3%. Across all ITL3 areas, Sandwell had the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest GDHI per person (remaining in the same place as in 2021) and had a **shortfall of £7,484 to the national average (£22,789).**

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, released 2024

<sup>3</sup> The EIU calculations based off ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, released 2024 and mid-year population estimates, released 2024

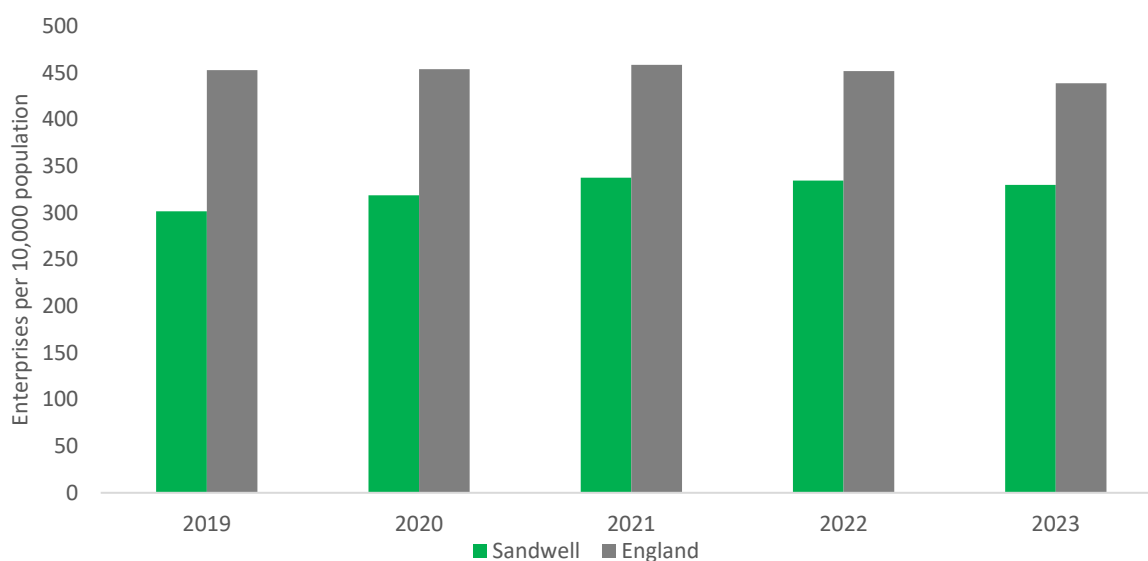
<sup>4</sup> ONS, Subregional productivity in the UK, released 2024

## 1.2. Business

### Business Environment

- In 2023, there were **11,465 enterprises<sup>5</sup>** in Sandwell, following the national trend (-1.9%), there was an annual decrease of 0.6%. However, over the longer-term (2018 - 2023) enterprise growth in Sandwell has been higher than the national average (+16.1% compared to +1.1%).
- There are still **too few enterprises in Sandwell at 330 enterprises per 10,000 population compared to 439 per 10,000 population for England in 2023**. For Sandwell to reach the national average requires an additional **3,786 active enterprises**.

#### Trends in Active Enterprises per 10,000 population:

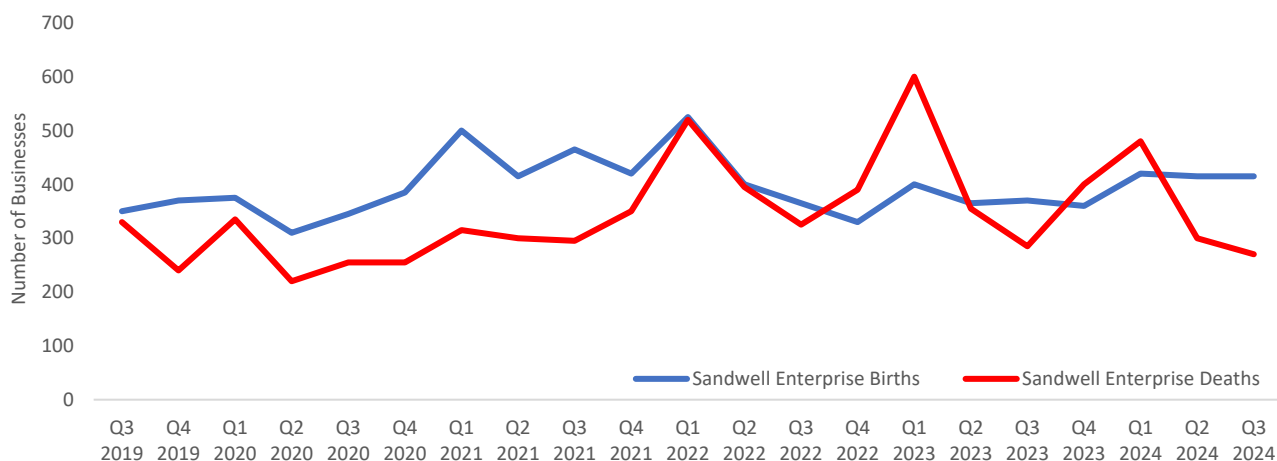


- **Sandwell's enterprise survival rates are lower than national levels on a short-term but perform better on a long-term basis.** Of the 1,635 enterprise births in 2022, there were 90.5% still active after 1 year with the UK at 92.3%. Of the 1,170 enterprise births in 2018 in Sandwell, 41.8% were still active after 5 years with the UK at 39.4%.
- Between 2018 and 2023, **enterprise births in Sandwell rose by 17.1%, from 1,315 to 1,540**. This bucked the national trend (-9.5%). However, there are **worrying more recent annual trends** as there has been **three consecutive years of declines** in enterprise births, with the latest data for between 2022 and 2023, showing an overall 5.8% decline, but reflects the national trend (-6.2%).
- There were **44 enterprise births per 10,000 population for Sandwell compared to 49 per 10,000 population for England in 2023**, to match the national average, requires an overall increase of 158 births per year.
- Experimental quarterly data<sup>6</sup> shows an overall positive picture locally and nationally as **business births were back ahead of business deaths in Q3 2024**.

<sup>5</sup> ONS, Business Demography, released 2024

<sup>6</sup> ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, released 2024

### Sandwell's Enterprise Births and Deaths Quarterly Trends:



- There is an opportunity to **harness innovative activity of the diverse business base locally**, 17.4% of companies in Sandwell are female-led<sup>7</sup> (UK average 19.1%).

### Sectoral Composition

- Out of 9 defined sectors, Sandwell has a **higher than the national proportion in 6 sectors for GVA<sup>8</sup>, 6 sectors in jobs<sup>9</sup> and 3 sectors for enterprises<sup>10</sup>** (illustrated by the green shading in the following three tables).

#### GVA per Sector:

Sector	Sandwell GVA	Percentage of Sandwell GVA	Percentage of England GVA
Advanced Manufacturing	£1.4bn	19.9%	11.1%
Building Technologies	£518m	7.6%	6.2%
Business Services	£1.5bn	21.4%	42.8%
Environmental Technologies	£202m	3.0%	2.0%
Health & Wellbeing	£767m	11.3%	8.6%
Public Sector inc. Education	£734m	10.8%	11.5%
Retail	£1.0bn	15.0%	10.5%
Transport Technologies	£612m	9.0%	3.6%
Visitor Economy	£134m	2.0%	3.7%
Total	£6.8bn	100%	100%

#### Jobs per Sector:

Sector	Sandwell Jobs	Percentage of Sandwell Jobs	Percentage of England Jobs
Advanced Manufacturing	20,820	16.2%	9.7%
Building Technologies	7,000	5.4%	4.7%
Business Services	18,820	14.6%	26.3%
Environmental Technologies	1,910	1.5%	1.0%
Health & Wellbeing	21,000	16.3%	15.7%
Public Sector inc. Education	17,500	13.6%	15.3%
Retail	23,500	18.3%	13.7%
Transport Technologies	12,505	9.7%	5.1%
Visitor Economy	5,575	4.3%	8.5%
Total	127,000	100%	100%

<sup>7</sup> Gender Index, released 2024

<sup>8</sup> ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, released 2024

<sup>9</sup> ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, released 2024

<sup>10</sup> ONS, UK Business Counts, released 2024

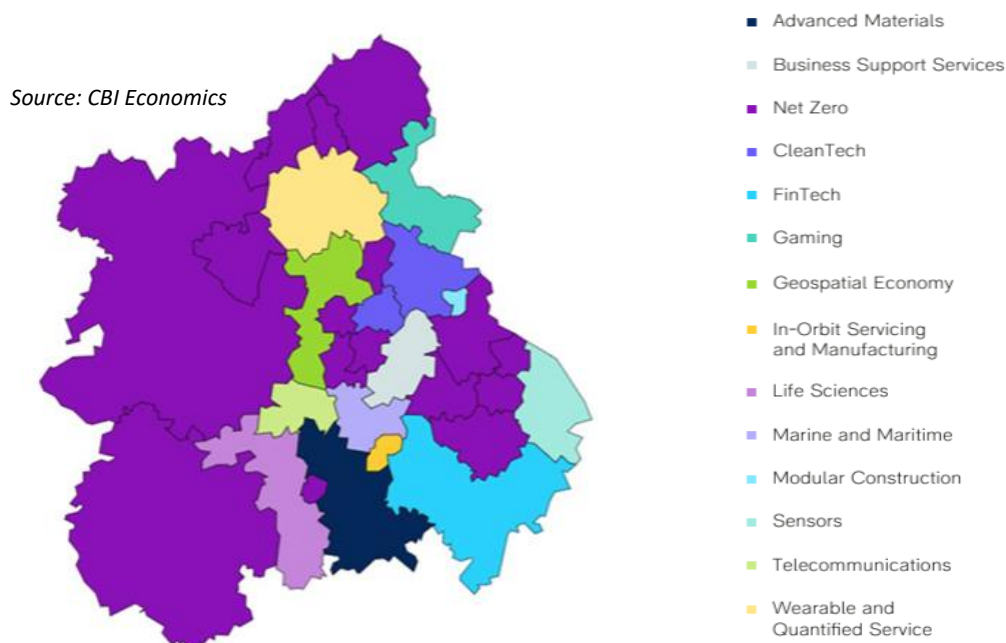
### Enterprises per Sector:

Sector	Sandwell Enterprises	Percentage of Sandwell Enterprises	Percentage of England Enterprises
Advanced Manufacturing	1,100	11.1%	11.5%
Building Technologies	1,230	12.4%	14.0%
Business Services	2,415	24.3%	37.7%
Environmental Technologies	65	0.7%	0.5%
Health & Wellbeing	550	5.5%	5.8%
Public Sector inc. Education	265	2.7%	4.1%
Retail	2,305	23.2%	14.6%
Transport Technologies	1,295	13.0%	4.4%
Visitor Economy	720	7.2%	7.4%
Total	9,945	100%	100%

### Sub-Sectors / High-Value Emerging Clusters

- There are similar strengths across all Black Country local authorities – especially in **manufacturing, in particular metals and materials supply chains and links to transport manufacturing along with retail / wholesale, and logistics / transport technologies.**
- CBI Economics have identified the UK’s **high-value, innovative and productive clusters**<sup>11</sup>. The research (based off a Cluster Index) revealed locally that **Sandwell’s top cluster was Net Zero.**

### West Midlands Top Clusters Within a Local Authority by Cluster Index:



### Innovation Funding

- Focusing on the project-level Innovate UK data<sup>12</sup>, since 2013/14, the Black Country has received almost £46m worth of funding across 333 grant awards. This represents 1.9% of the total West Midlands region awards over this time period, and 0.3% of the UK total. **Of the Black Country local authorities, Sandwell (£6.4m from 70 awards) received the second lowest amount of R&D/innovation funding via Innovate UK programmes in the last decade.**

<sup>11</sup> CBI Economics, realising regional potential, released 2024

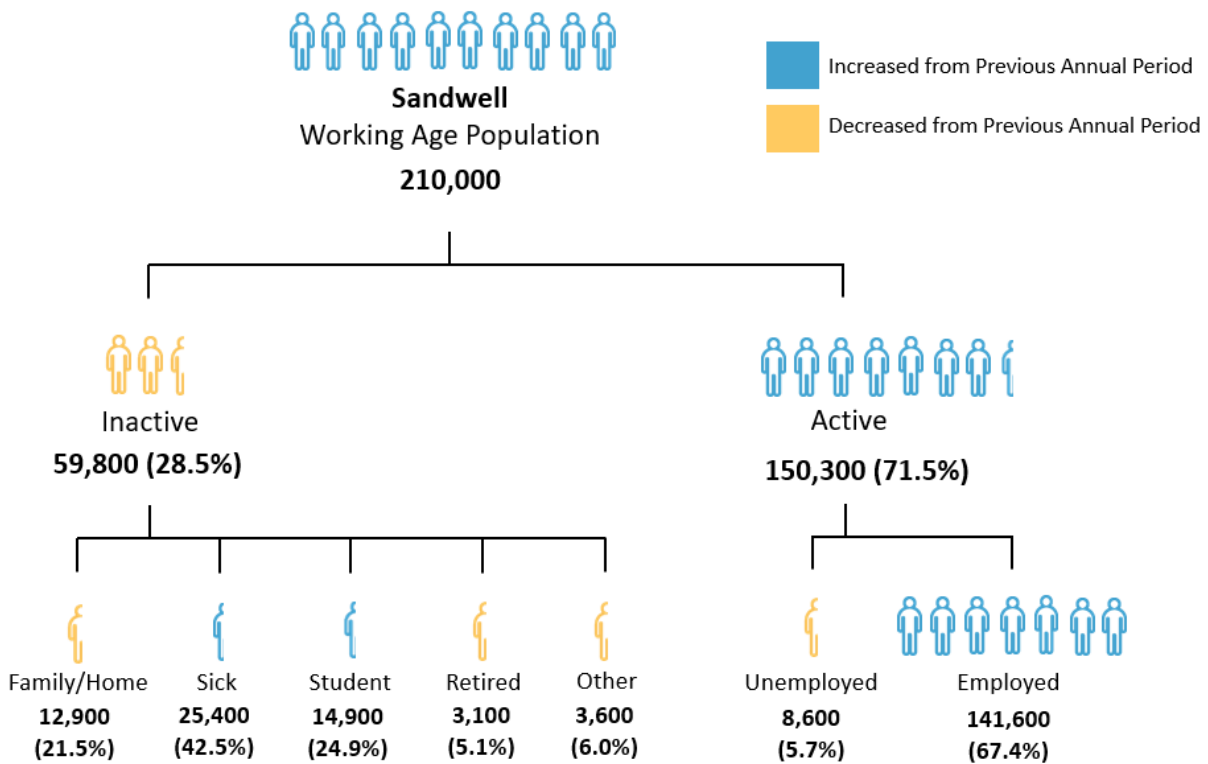
<sup>12</sup> Innovate UK, released 2024. Please note this relates to direct awards to all organisations including Catapults, which may distort the true picture as funding is spent on supporting businesses directly beyond the organisation’s geography

## 1.3 People

### Labour Market

- In the year ending June 2024, **Sandwell's employment rate remained below the national average** (67.4% vs 75.7%) and significantly below the **government's new 80% employment rate target**. For Sandwell to reach this target would require an **additional 26,400 people to be employed**.
- Economic inactivity<sup>13</sup> is an issue in Sandwell as the latest figures show that 28.5% of this working age population is inactive.** Economic inactivity in the last year has been heavily influenced by students and those that are long-term sick.

### Labour Market Activity, for the Period of July 2023 – June 2024 and the Change Since July 2022 - July 2023:



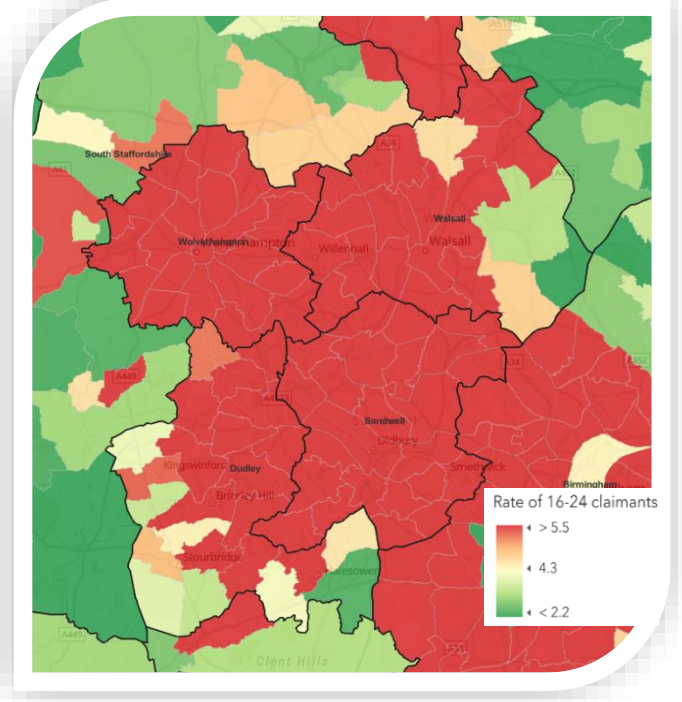
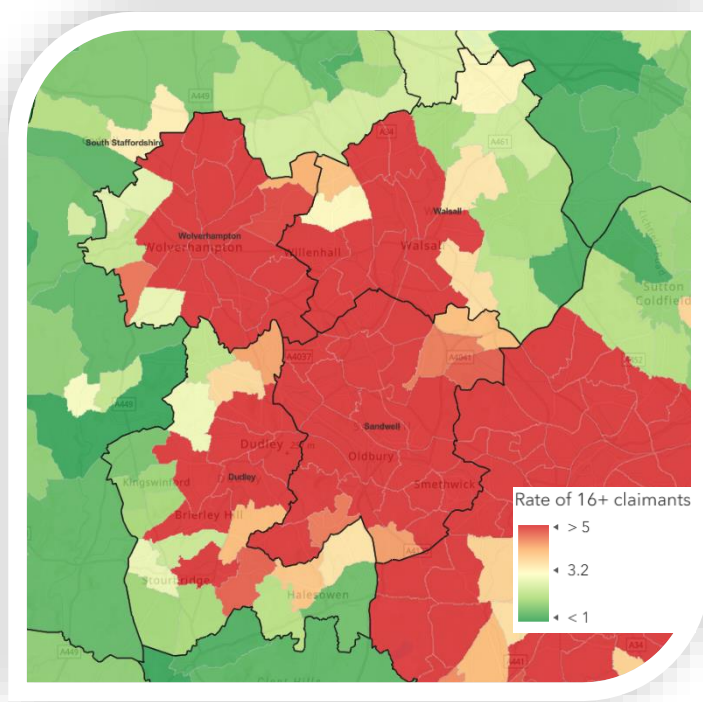
- Total claimant<sup>14</sup> numbers remain heightened across Sandwell.** There are approximately 16,000 people claiming benefits looking for work. This equates to 6.0% of the population aged 16 years and over, which is nearly double that of the national rate at (3.2%). **Worryingly, youth claimants (aged 16-24) remain stubbornly high with a rate of 7.7% compared to 4.3% nationally.** Across all local authorities, Sandwell came in at 6<sup>th</sup> highest.

<sup>13</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2024

<sup>14</sup> ONS/ Department for Work and Pensions, claimant count, released 2024



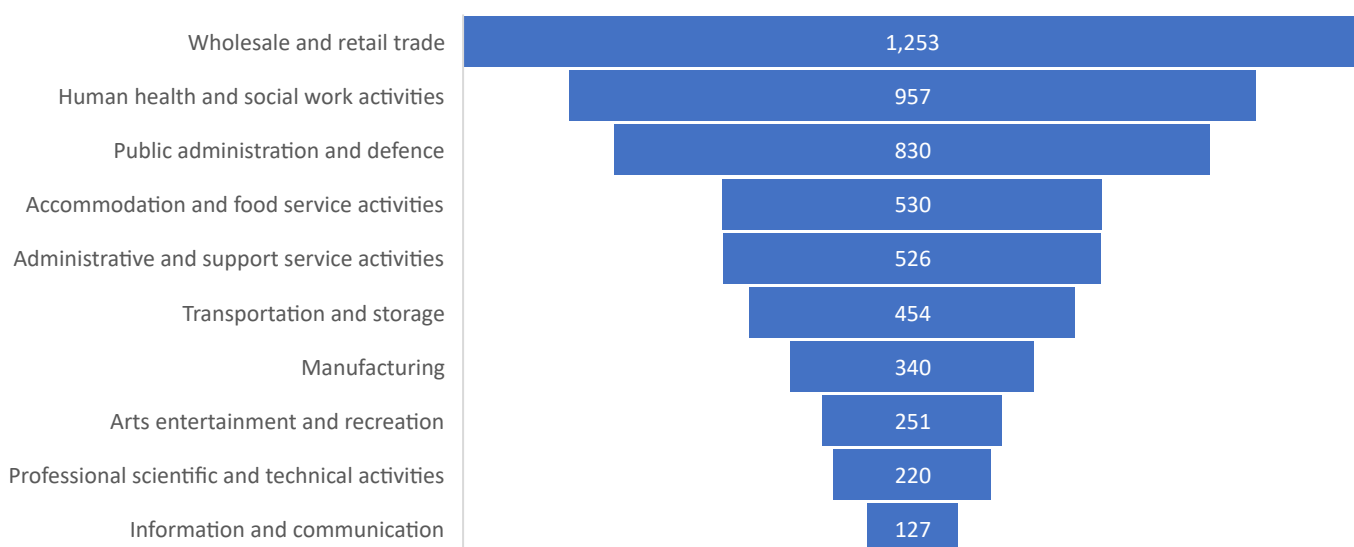
## Claimant Rates for 16+ (Left) and 16-24 (Right) Compared to National:



- Throughout 2024, the UK labour market experienced a **marked slowdown in job postings and vacancies**. **Rising costs and economic uncertainty led businesses to scale back recruitment efforts** as employers prioritised cost control and workforce retention. **For employees this meant increased caution, with fewer switching jobs**. This shift created a **restrained labour market**, where both business demand and workforce mobility reflected a focus on stability rather than expansion.
- **In Sandwell, job posting trends mirrored the national decline**, with the total number of postings dropping by 23.6% to 24,224, compared to a 25.2% fall across the UK. This **downward trajectory appears set to persist into 2025**, as new postings also continue to decrease (-23.7%). **Despite this challenging environment, interest among job seekers, measured by the Interest Quotient<sup>15</sup>, remains relevantly buoyant**.
- Despite the overall decline in job postings, **some sectors continued to show notable activity**. Wholesale and retail trade and human health and social work activities recorded high levels of postings, **reflecting sustained demand in these essential industries**. While **arts, entertainment, and recreation reported more moderate activity** and information and communication had the fewest unique postings.

<sup>15</sup> Adzuna Intelligence, accessed January 2025. Please note, Interest quotient (IQ) is a metric that uses jobseeker data to quantify the level of jobseeker interest in roles for specific occupations, roles within specific industries, or roles requesting specific skills. This metric provides a proxy for talent supply to complement market demand data. By comparing interest quotient and demand, we can identify where there are mismatches in talent/supply and demand.

## Top Industries (SIC 2007) Hiring<sup>16</sup> in Sandwell:



- Analysis of the types of occupations reveals a **strong demand for ‘primary school teacher’ and ‘primary school teacher’**. There is also **notable demand for ‘maintenance engineer’** which indicates growth or ongoing requirements within the technical and industrial sectors.

## Top 10 Most In-Demand Occupations for Sandwell in 2024:

Occupation	Median Salary	Demand	Location Quotient	Interest Quotient
Primary School Teacher	£38,406	509	2.13	3.04
Maintenance Engineer	£42,500	464	4.25	13.6
Teaching Assistant	£21,589	342	1.16	10.01
Driver	£37,546	338	3.05	35.24
SEN Assistant	£21,575	322	1.74	7.87
Teacher	£38,238	313	2.58	2.92
Healthcare Support Worker	£22,830	293	1.29	42.83
Assistant	£25,765	286	1.43	18.16
Manager	£36,021	270	0.67	11.52
Administrator	£23,484	249	1.73	27.82

- **Understanding which sectors show the most significant demand can help pinpoint where there might be skills gaps, enabling targeted training and development initiatives to fill those gaps.**

## Early Years and Skills

- **Poor educational achievement** is one of the strongest predictors of low healthy life expectancy, and a bad educational start in life fuels a trajectory of reduced educational attainment and weaker prospects. **Approximately 38% of Sandwell pupils do not achieve a good level of development at the end of reception<sup>17</sup> (England 32%).**
- **31.2% (64,300) of Sandwell’s working age residents had RQF 4+ qualifications<sup>18</sup>** compared to 46.7% nationally in 2023, an annual increase of 43.8%, (+19,600) which was significantly above the national increase of 6.3%. **Although, for Sandwell to reach the national level requires 32,044 residents to gain a qualification at Level 4 and above.**

<sup>16</sup> Note only postings where the employer can be identified are included

<sup>17</sup> Department for Education, released 2024

<sup>18</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, released 2024

- At the other end of the scale, 11.8% (24,300) of Sandwell's working age population had no formal qualifications, above the national average of 6.2% in 2023. Despite staying the same proportion as 2022, the actual number of people increased by 1,900 (+8.5% vs -3.4% national). **For Sandwell to reach the national level requires 11,545 residents to gain a qualification.**

### Qualification Profile, 2023:

		Sandwell	Black Country	England
RQF4+	Numerator	64,300	259,000	16,043,100
	Percent	31.2%	35.7%	46.7%
	Shortfall	32,044	79,769	
	Annual Change	43.8%	20.1%	6.3%
RQF3 only	Numerator	34,500	154,000	7,103,000
	Percent	16.7%	21.2%	20.7%
	Shortfall	8,156	-	
	Annual Change	-25.8%	3.5%	-0.3%
RQF2 only	Numerator	52,600	173,400	6,558,900
	Percent	25.5%	23.9%	19.1%
	Shortfall	-	-	
	Annual Change	-72.3%	-74.0%	-80.4%
RQF1 only	Numerator	11,000	23,700	893,200
	Percent	5.3%	3.3%	2.6%
	Shortfall	-	-	
	Annual Change	197.3%	21.5%	-3.3%
Other qualifications	Numerator	19,400	44,300	1,597,500
	Percent	9.4%	6.1%	4.7%
	Shortfall	-	-	
	Annual Change	92.1%	4.0%	-1.1%
No qualifications	Numerator	24,300	70,300	2,124,000
	Percent	11.8%	9.7%	6.2%
	Shortfall	-11,545	25,449	-
	Annual Change	8.5%	-0.7%	-3.4%

- New official statistics in development on skills and qualification suitability in the labour market<sup>19</sup>, shows **32.4% of employed Sandwell adults were less qualified than average for their current occupation** (national average 21.3%).

### Apprenticeship Starts

- In the 2023/24 academic year, there were **2,050 apprenticeship starts<sup>20</sup> in Sandwell**. When compared to 2022/23, this was a **decrease of 2.8% (-60)**, whereas there was an overall national **increase (+0.7%)**. However, exploring apprenticeship starts by level, there was an annual increase of 9.0% in higher apprenticeship starts, above the national average increase of 8.2%.

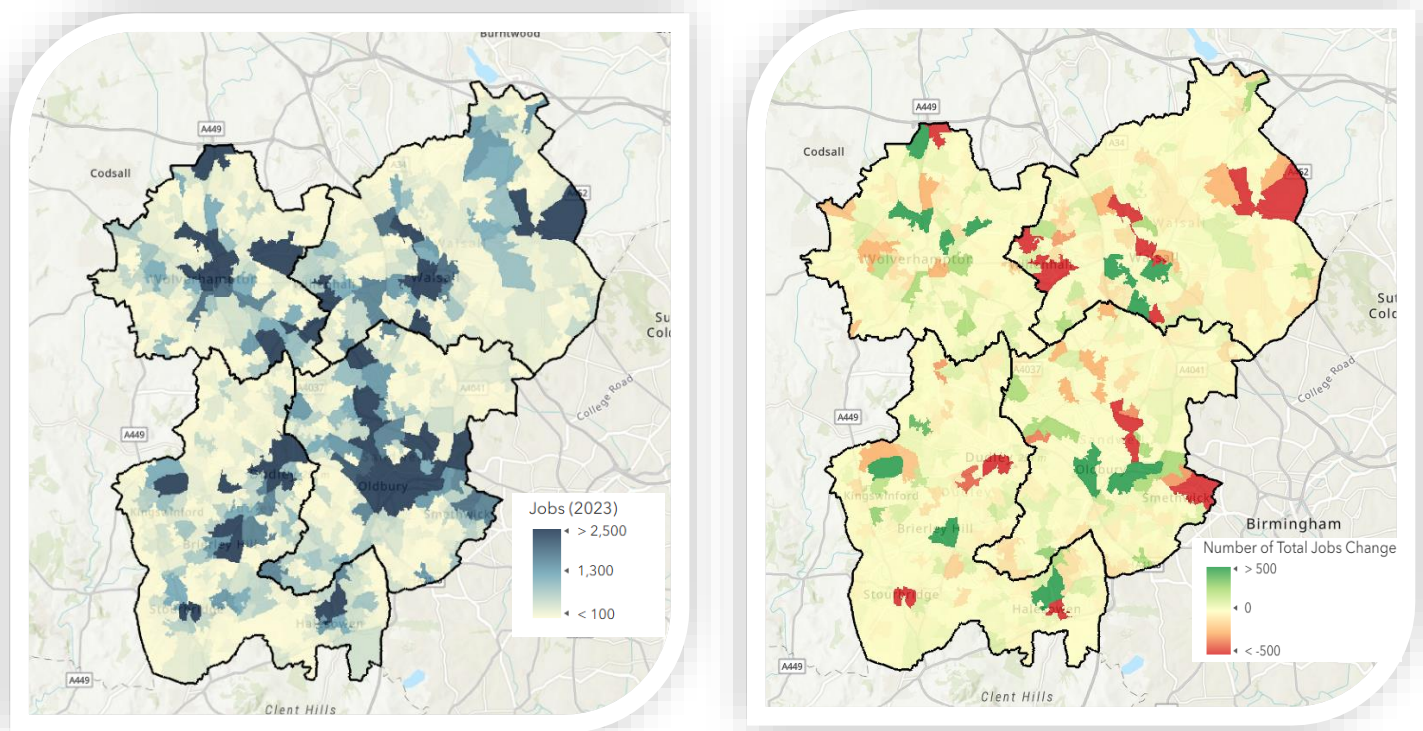
### Workforce Jobs

- Jobs in Sandwell have now increased for three consecutive years. **The latest data shows an annual increase of 0.8% between 2022 and 2023 and jobs now totalling 127,000**. Nationally there was an annual increase of 1.3%.

<sup>19</sup> ONS, Understanding skill and qualification suitability in the labour market, released 2024

<sup>20</sup> Department for Education, apprenticeships, released 2024

## Total Number of Jobs (Left) and Annual Change (Right):



## Earnings

- In 2024, full-time annual resident earnings<sup>21</sup> for Sandwell reached £31,915, an annual increase of 7.2% (+£2,154) compared to an increase of 6.9% nationally. However, earnings were approximately 84.8% of the England average (£37,617 - a shortfall of £5,702). Notably for Sandwell, resident data shows that females earn more than men while work based data shows the inverse (-0.6% and 2.7% respectively).
- Whereas in 2024, full-time annual workplace earnings for Sandwell were higher at £32,076, (85.2% of the England average, £37,630). An annual increase of 4.7% (+£1,437), compared to an increase of 6.9% nationally.

## Population and Health

- In 2023, there were 347,551 residents in Sandwell, an annual increase of 0.9% (+2,969) – just slightly behind the national rate growth of 1.0%.
- In the 2021-23 period, life expectancy<sup>22</sup> in Sandwell remains below the national average, for males it was 76.3 years and for females it was 80.8 years (England 79.1 years and 83.1 years respectively). While healthy life expectancy<sup>23</sup> for males in Sandwell was 55.5 years (England 61.5 years) and 54.8 years for females (England 61.9 years). When compared to the 2018-20 period, there were notable declines in Sandwell's healthy life expectancy by 7.5 years for females, 5.2 years for males.

<sup>21</sup> ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, released 2024

<sup>22</sup> ONS, Life expectancy for local areas of Great Britain, released 2024

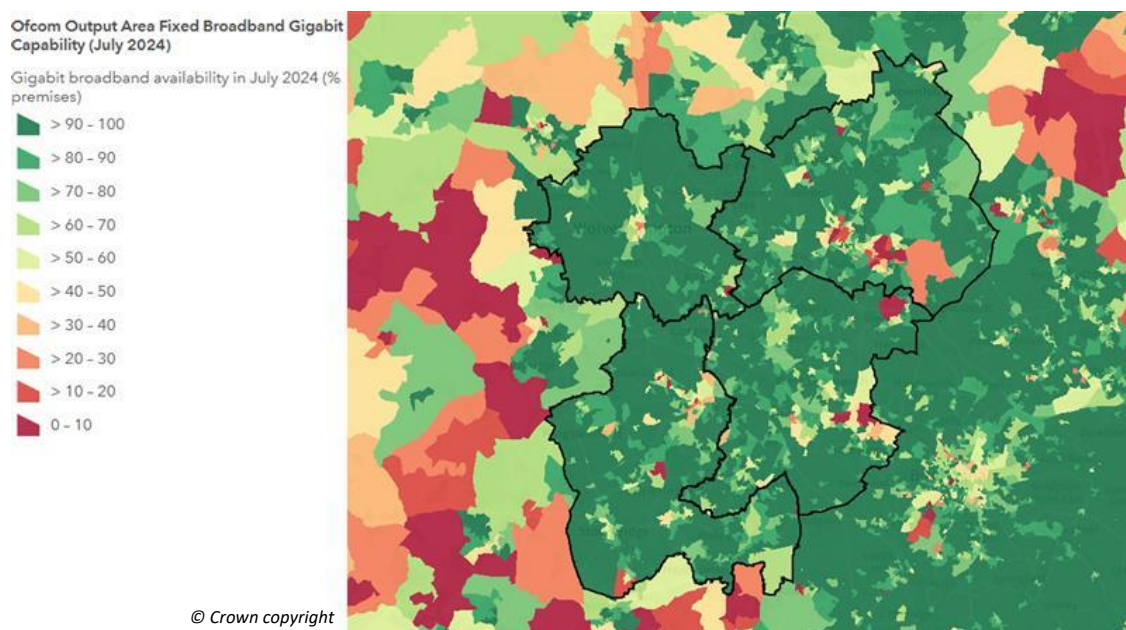
<sup>23</sup> ONS, Health state life expectancies in England and Wales, released 2024

## 1.4. Place

### Infrastructure

- As of July 2024, **90.9% of premises in Sandwell had gigabit connectivity<sup>24</sup>**, above the UK-wide figure of **81.7%**. However, only **62.3% of premises in Sandwell had full fibre connectivity**, below the UK-wide figure of 67.4%.

#### Gigabit Broadband Connectivity:



- There are **shortfalls in housing supply to the demand**; to address this, the government has set a national target of building 1.5 million new homes in the next five years. **Provisional estimates for Sandwell, in 2024, show 647 net additional homes** leading to a total of **approximately 136,406 homes overall<sup>25</sup>**. With the new government target, Sandwell would need to increase to 1,346 net new homes per year.
- Housing affordability ratios<sup>26</sup> show that in 2023, residents in Sandwell could **expect to spend 6.8 times their annual earnings buying a home**. The equivalent figure in England is 8.3 times annual earnings.
- In 2023/24, **there was a total of 204 additional affordable dwelling starts and 164 completions<sup>27</sup> in Sandwell**. Since 2022/23, this was a decrease from 326 starts but an increase from 123 completions.
- Looking at the efficiency of housing, by using Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)<sup>28</sup> shows in the year ending March 2023 (based of rating bands for a 10-year period), **where Band A is very efficient and Band G is very energy inefficient, shows that nearly 90% of Sandwell lodgements were in Band D (43.0%), Band C (30.5%) and Band E (15.2%)**.

<sup>24</sup> Ofcom, Connected Nations, released 2024

<sup>25</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Live tables on housing supply: net additional dwellings and on dwelling stock, both released 2024.

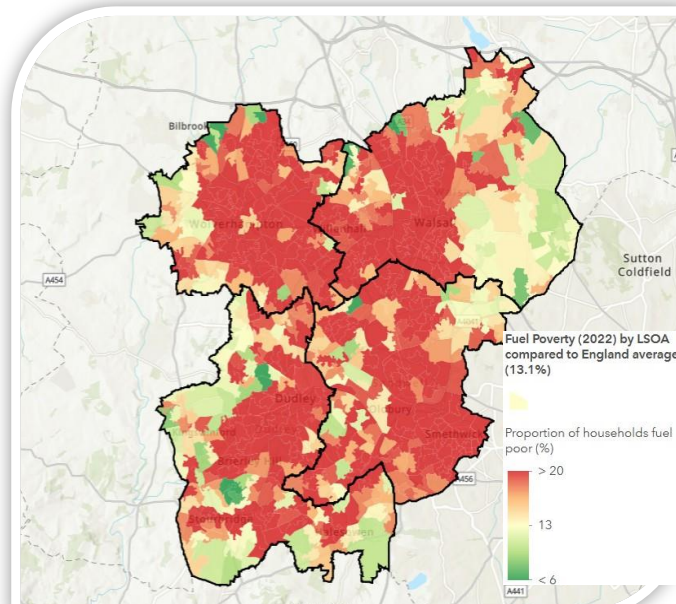
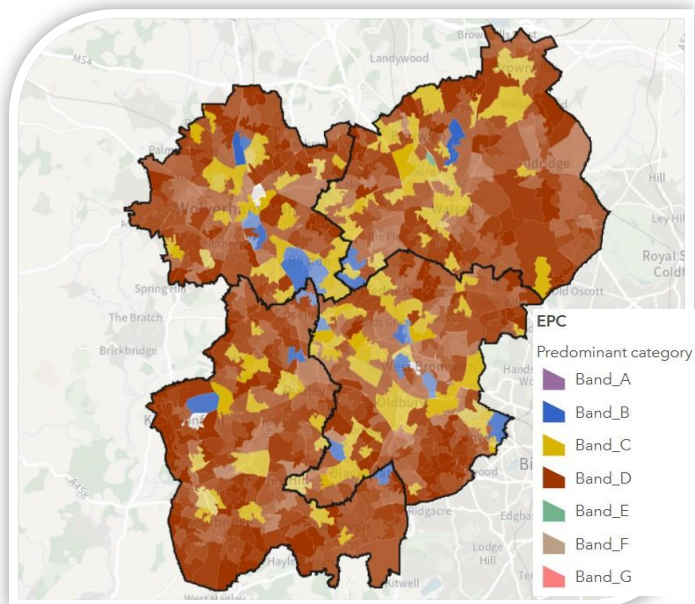
<sup>26</sup> ONS, Housing affordability in England and Wales, released 2024

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Live tables on affordable housing supply, released 2024

<sup>28</sup> ONS, Energy efficiency of housing, released 2024. This data does not reflect all dwellings in England and Wales, because not every dwelling has an EPC

- **Challenges remain with households in fuel poverty<sup>29</sup>**, figures show in 2022 that the West Midlands region continues to have the highest rates of any region at 19.6%, meaning it is significantly above the overall England average of 13.1%. **In Sandwell 22.0% (29,683) of households were in fuel poverty. Across all local areas in England, this was the 5<sup>th</sup> highest (remaining the same place in 2021).**

**EPCs (Left) and Fuel Poverty (Right):**



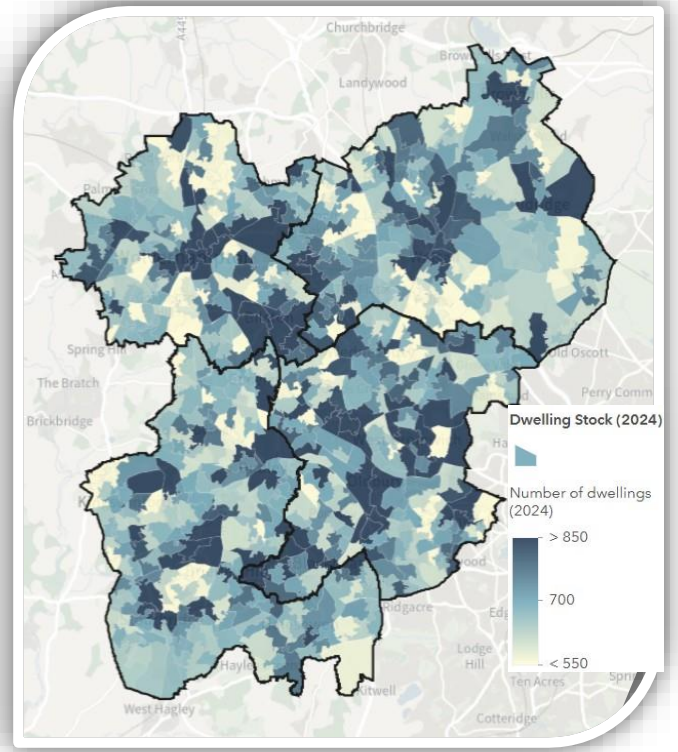
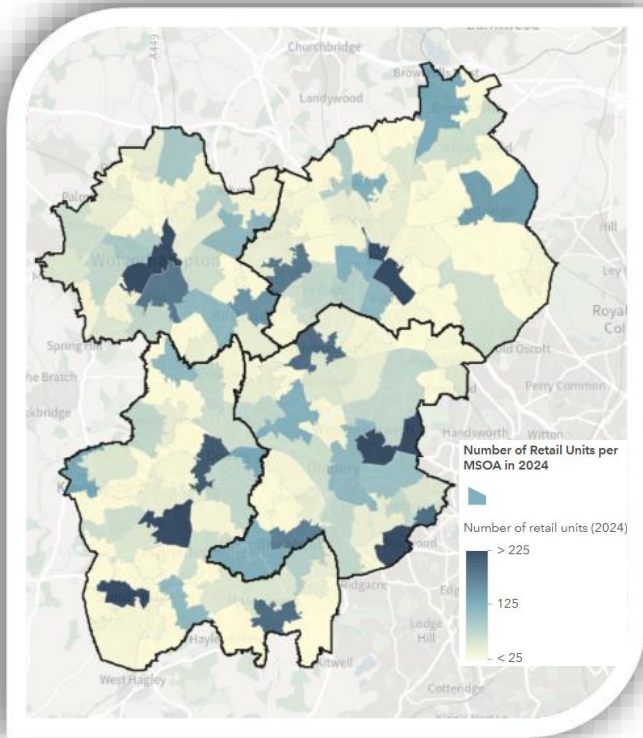
© Crown copyright

- Across Sandwell, as of March 2024, there was a total of **10,890 non-domestic properties<sup>30</sup>**, this has remained unchanged for Sandwell compared to a 0.6% decrease nationally. **These latest figures are the lowest recorded since 2016.**
- Analysing non-domestic properties by type, there was a total of **2,950 retail properties across Sandwell**, joint highest figures (with the previous year) on record (since 2011). There was an annual national decline of 0.3%. **The rateable value of retail properties in Sandwell fell from nearly £61.3m in 2023 to £55.9m in 2024 (-8.8% vs -10.5% nationally).**
- **Industrial properties increased by 30 to 4,510 properties** overall in Sandwell (+0.7% vs +0.5% nationally). **Office properties declined annually in Sandwell by 20 to a total of 980 properties (-2.0% vs -1.5% nationally).**

<sup>29</sup> Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, Sub-regional fuel poverty in England, released 2024

<sup>30</sup> Valuation Office Agency, Non-domestic rating: stock of properties collection, released 2024

### Retail Properties (Left) and Dwellings (Right):

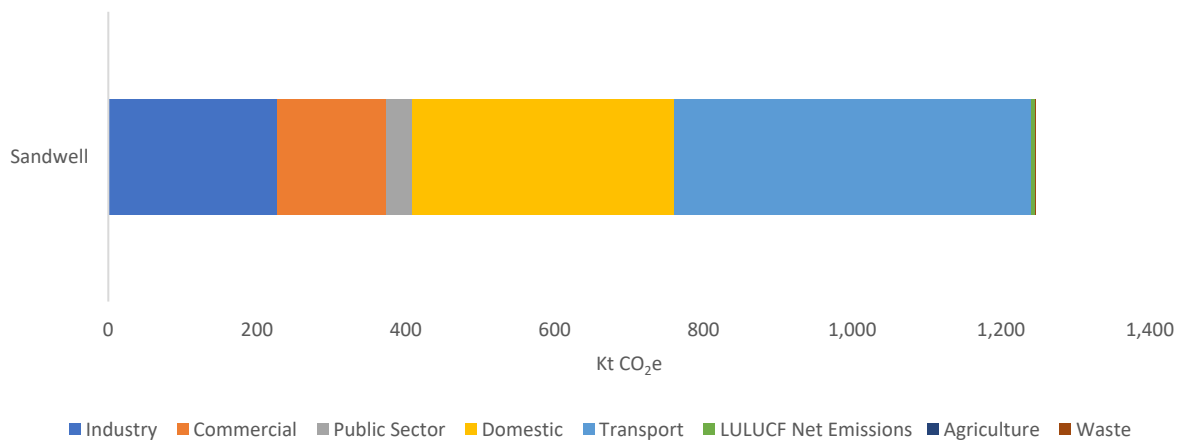


© Crown copyright

### Emissions

- In 2022, total carbon dioxide emissions<sup>31</sup> were still slightly over 1,200 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in Sandwell. However, this has decreased at a faster rate than nationally since 2021 (-6.9% vs -6.1% respectively). Longer term (since 2005), emissions have decreased by 45.1% for Sandwell (England decreased by 43.9%). However, there is still a long way to go to reach Net Zero by 2041.

### Breakdown of Sandwell's Carbon Dioxide Emissions, 2022:



<sup>31</sup> Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, UK local authority & regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, released 2024

## **DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY**

Every effort is made to provide accurate and complete information however we make no claims, promises or guarantees and expressly disclaim any liability for errors, omissions or actions taken by others on the basis of information provided.

For any queries please contact: Professor Delma Dwight ([Delma.Dwight@theeiu.org](mailto:Delma.Dwight@theeiu.org))

This document contains maps that are subject to the following:

Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] [2025]

Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database rights 2025.

Walsall Council  
The Civic Centre  
Walsall  
WS1 1TP

[www.theeiu.org](http://www.theeiu.org)

© The Economic Intelligence Unit 2025

