

West Yorkshire Economic Strategy: Emerging Evidence Summary Pack

West Yorkshire Economic Strategy: draft policy in development



A New Economic Strategy to deliver the West Yorkshire Plan

Devolution provides a historic opportunity for West Yorkshire. Now is the time for a new Economic Strategy to deliver the vision and the missions of the West Yorkshire Plan.

Working collaboratively, the Economic Strategy will take a whole systems approach to tackle long-term, systemic and complex issues facing our region.

Our Partnership: this is a regional strategy and is being developed in partnership with the five West Yorkshire local authorities. It provides a regional framework that aligns to district plans and strategies as well as northern, national, and international opportunities.

The West Yorkshire 2040 Vision and missions

Our vision:

A brighter West Yorkshire –
a place that works for all.
An engine room of ideas and
creativity, where anyone
can make a home.

Our vision and missions put equity, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of everything we do. We will lead the way to embed these values across all our work.

The West Yorkshire Plan includes:

- The West Yorkshire story – our region's unique identity
- The future of West Yorkshire – our vision and missions for 2040
- Working together – our partnerships for change

1

Mission 1:

A prosperous West Yorkshire –
an inclusive economy with well paid jobs

2

Mission 2:

A happy West Yorkshire –
great places and healthy communities

3

Mission 3:

A well-connected West Yorkshire –
a strong transport system

4

Mission 4:

A sustainable West Yorkshire –
making lives greener

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Mission 5:

A safe West Yorkshire –
a region where everyone can flourish

Economic Assessment

Entrenched, generational and a significant constraint to inclusion and prosperity.

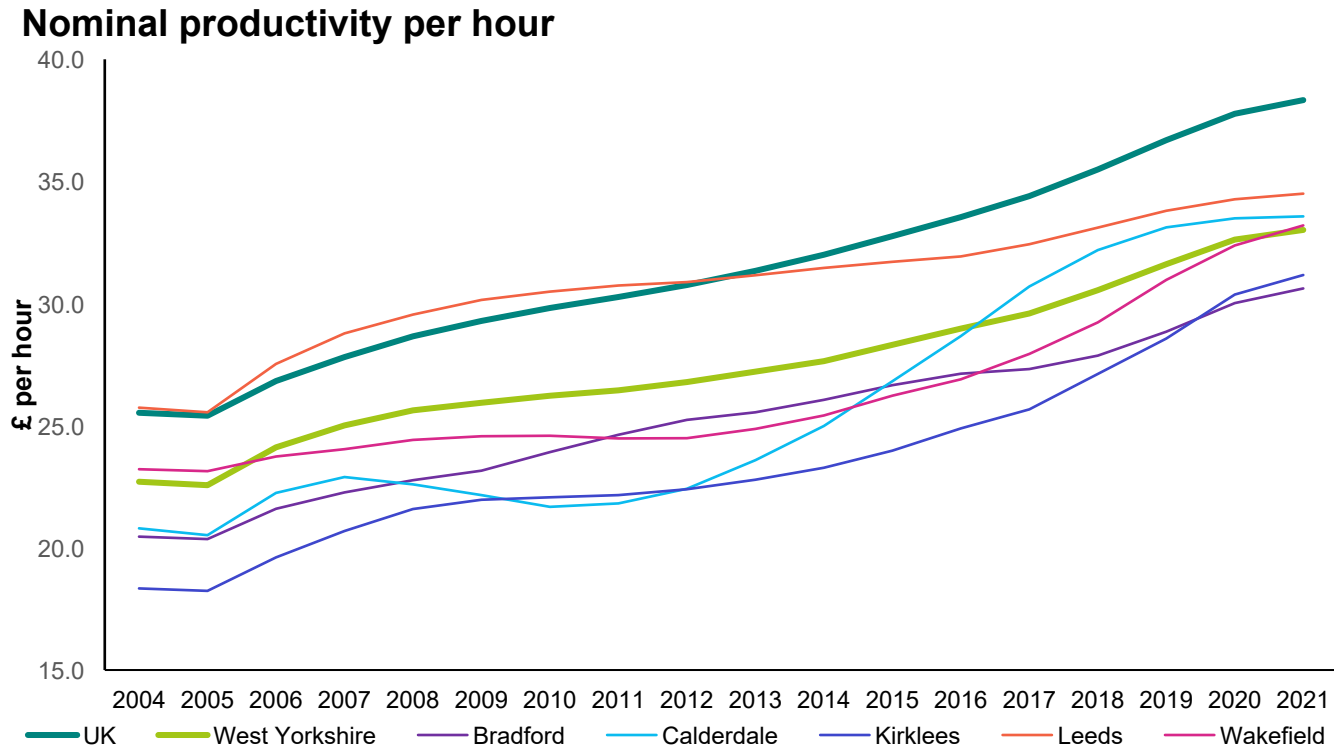
West Yorkshire's productivity growth has not kept pace with the rest of the UK. This is impacting on living standards across the region.

Longstanding deprivation, economic inactivity and health inequality is holding back economic growth.

Too many people in the West Yorkshire workforce do not have the qualifications and skills they need to reach their full potential.

Divergence from the national average

Figure: Current Price (smoothed) GVA per hour worked (£), 2004-2021



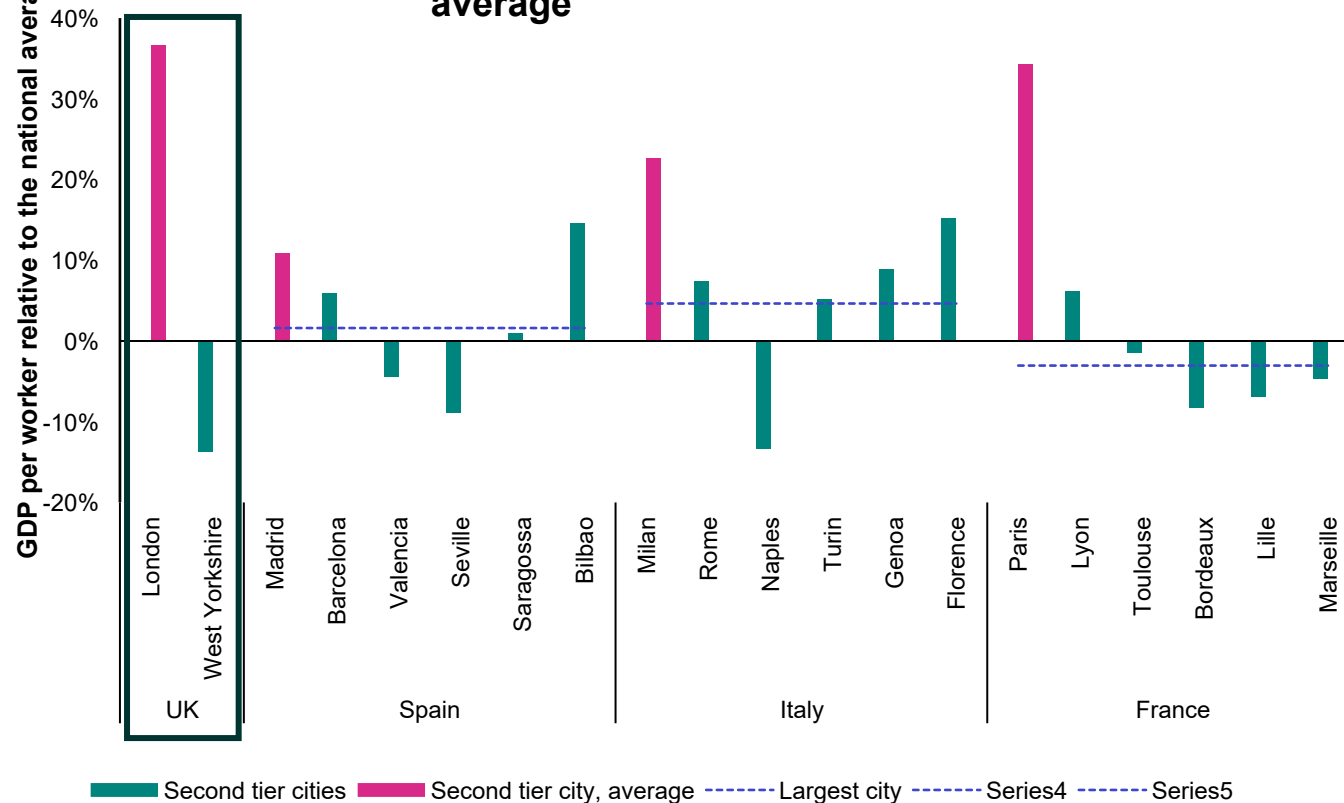
- West Yorkshire grew above national average until 2008, mostly driven by Leeds.
- Since then, most of West Yorkshire (including Leeds) had a weaker performance than the national average.
- That gap (13.9% less productive in nominal terms) is estimated to account for **£9.7 billion in 2021 alone (around £4,100 per resident)**. Closing that gap would boost West Yorkshire living standards.

Source: ONS, Subregional productivity: labour productivity indices by UK ITL2 and ITL3 subregions

Comparisons with other countries suggest that West Yorkshire should aim to reach UK's average productivity

Figure: Labour productivity, 2019 (GDP per worker in USD, constant prices, constant PPP, base year 2015)

Main metropolitan areas productivity compared to national average



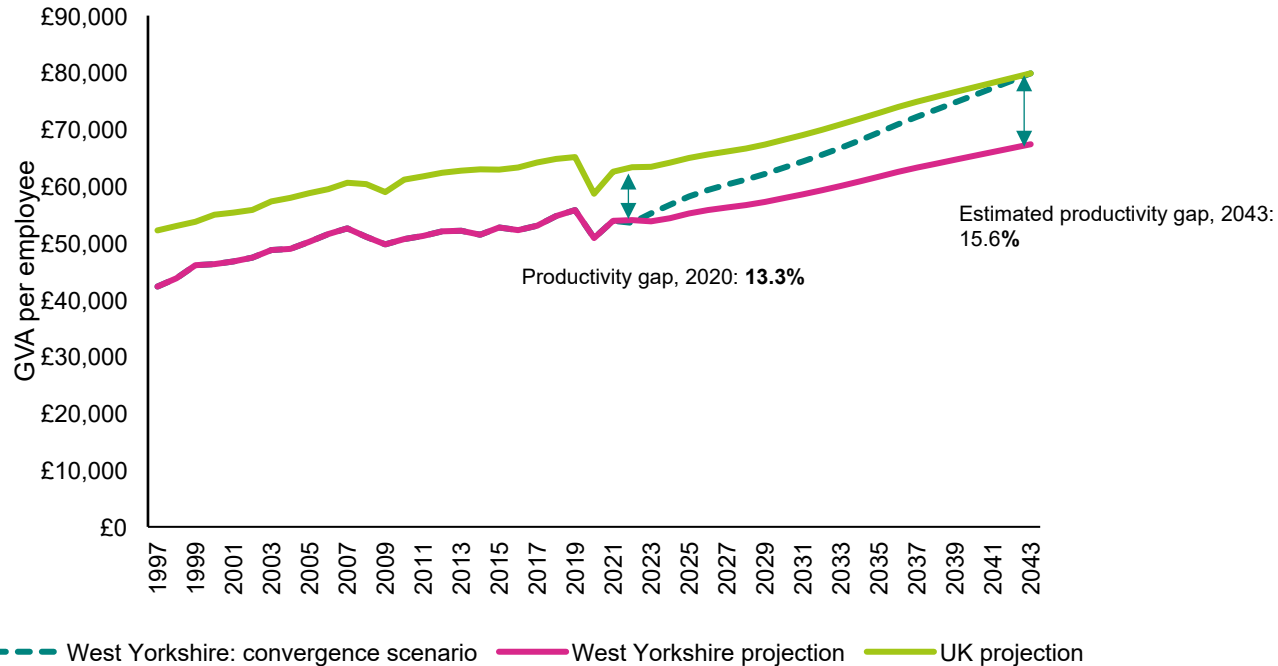
- West Yorkshire underperforms the national average, while second tier cities in other large countries tend to perform in line with the average.
- Not all metro areas overperform but only Naples underperforms (against the national average) as much as West Yorkshire.
- This [feature](#) is common across the UK's largest cities outside London like Manchester, Glasgow and Birmingham.
- London's productivity relative to the national average is broadly in line with other countries.

Source: OECD, Metropolitan areas, GDP per worker. Leeds OECD's definition of metropolitan area being used for West Yorkshire. The second cities considered are the following. **Spain:** Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, Bilbao and Saragossa. **Italy:** Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin, Palermo, Genoa and Florence. **France:** Lyon, Toulouse, Strasbourg, Bordeaux, Nantes and Lille.

The prize of convergence is enormous

Figure: GVA performance and projections, UK and West Yorkshire (1997-2043)

Productivity scenarios



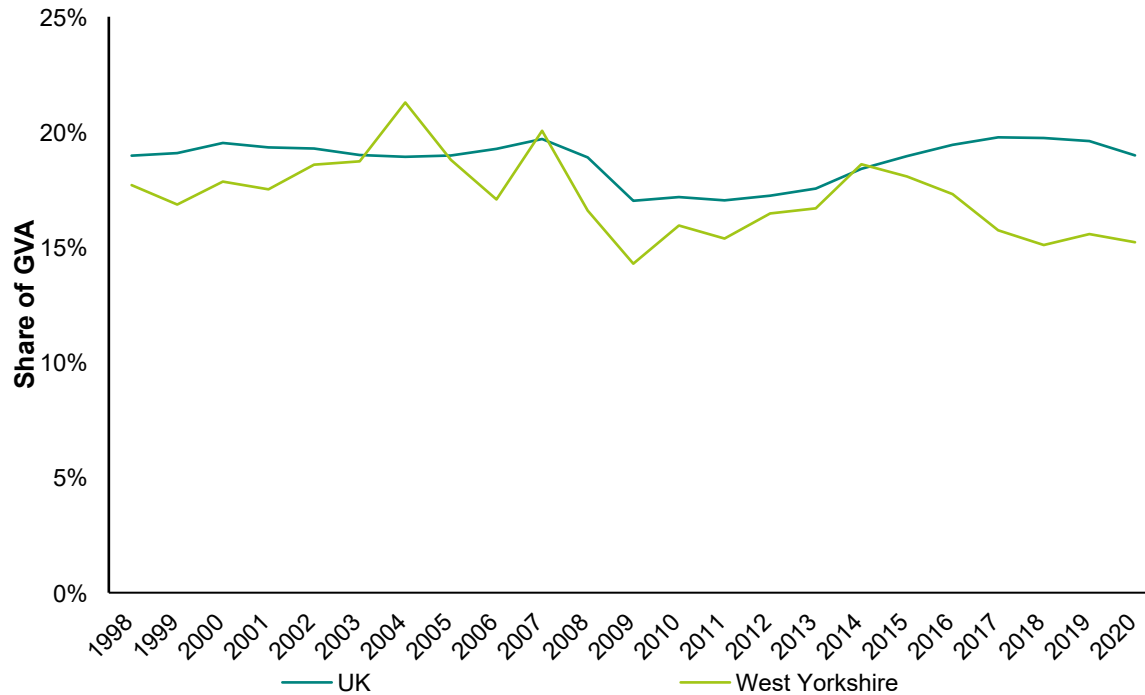
- Projections suggest the productivity gap will widen in the next two decades.
- Closing the productivity gap by 2043, would mean a GVA growing at 2.3 per cent a year, instead of 1.6 per cent projected. **That would mean an economy £15bn larger than projected and £38bn larger than today.**

Source: Experian, West Yorkshire Combined Authority REM.

West Yorkshire's investment and skills pipeline is diverging from UK average

Figure: Investment at the subnational by ITL2 (1998-2020)

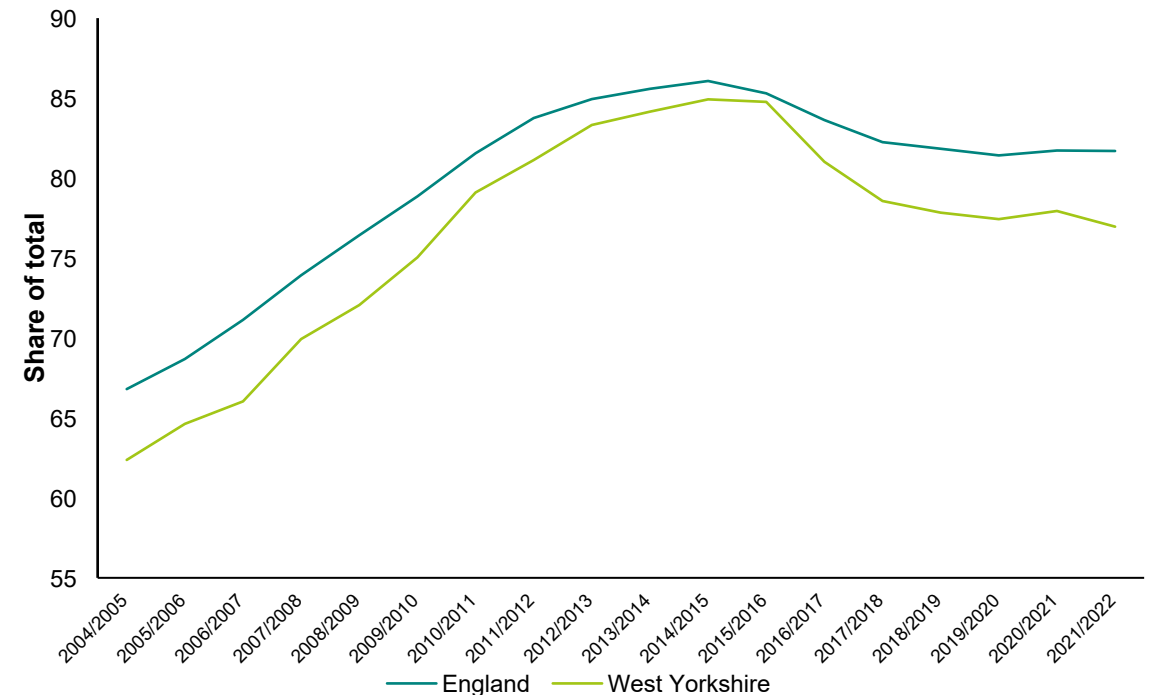
Gross Fixed Capital Formation share of GVA



Source: ONS, Experimental regional gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) estimates by asset type: 1997 to 2020. ONS, GVA at ITL2, current price estimates: 1998 to 2020.

Figure: Share of who achieve level 2 and level 3 by the age of 19 (2004/05 and 2021/22)

Who achieve level 2 by age of 19



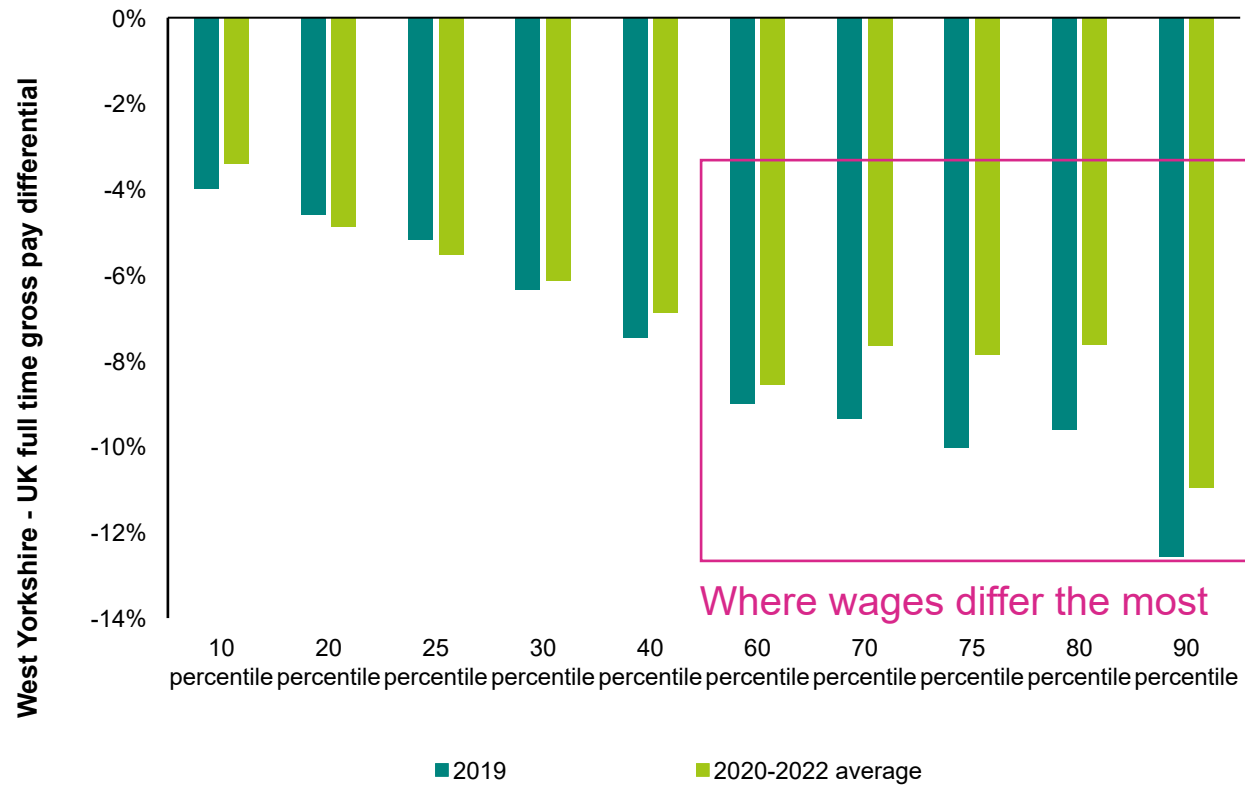
Source: DfE, Level 2 attainment age 16 to 25, Academic year 2021/22.

- The divergence takes place around the **time that West Yorkshire's productivity diverges from the national average.**
- This is a common feature across all local areas and asset types (buildings, ICT, intangibles, etc) in West Yorkshire similar to national average and there is underperformance in almost all industries.

Closing productivity gap alone likely to boost wages at the top but unlikely at the bottom

Figure: Workplace median pay, full time workers by Metropolitan County 2019-2022

Differences by wage distribution



- The same way the productivity gap is driven by the lack of high performing firms, a similar trend is observed in wages, with the largest gap at the top of the distribution.
- The wage differences between West Yorkshire and the national average are **mostly driven by lack of highly paid jobs.**
- Under certain circumstances, closing this gap could lead to issues around housing affordability.
- This highlights the importance of **inclusive growth.**

Sector Specialisms

West Yorkshire is a diversified economy

Figure: Industrial specialisms within West Yorkshire

Local Authority	Specialisms (based on jobs Location Quotients), 2021
Bradford	Textiles Machinery manufacturing Manufacturing of chemicals (detergents, soap and others)
Calderdale	Monetary intermediation Insurance Machinery manufacturing Furniture
Leeds	Office administrative and support activities Legal activities Activities auxiliary to financial services, except insurance and pension funding Head Office Activities
Wakefield	Logistics: transport and warehousing Textiles Glass Manufacturing
Kirklees	Furniture Textiles Chemicals. Pesticides and paints

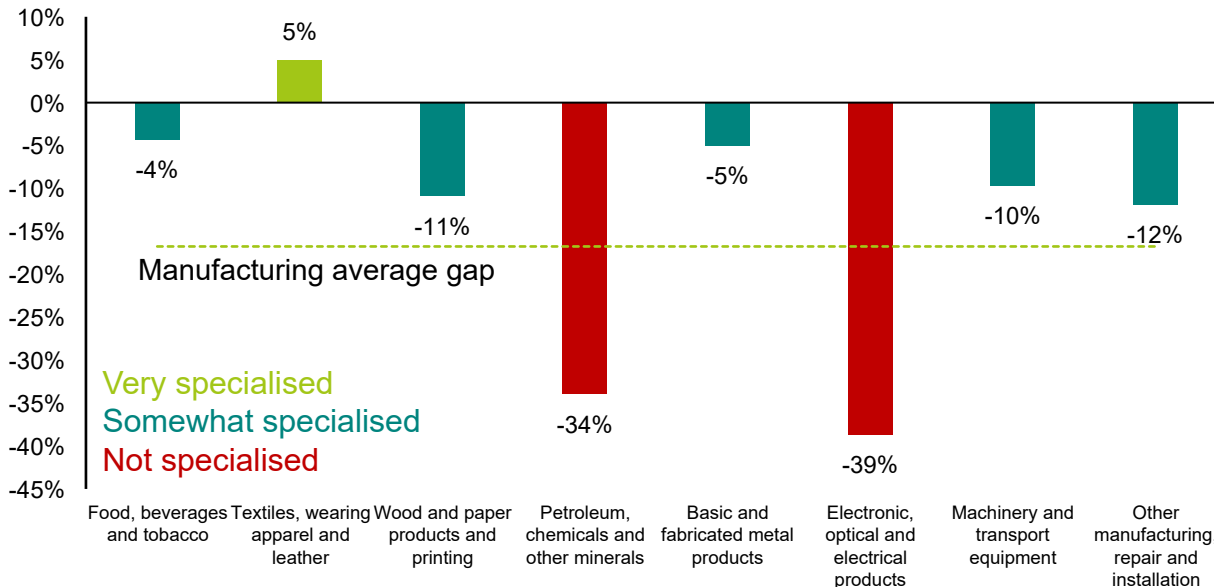
- West Yorkshire has a strong manufacturing sector with more than **100,000 manufacturing jobs** - the highest number of manufacturing jobs per capita in a Combined Authority; and 13.4% of GVA.
- The manufacturing base is diverse both geographically (mostly outside Leeds) and sectorally (textile, chemicals and machinery).
- Across all Combined Authorities, West Yorkshire has the highest number of jobs in “Financial service activities” and “Computer programming, consultancy and related activities” (2021).

Source: NOMIS Note: The sectors selected are a combination of high Location coefficients and the employment share they represent.

Closing the productivity gap will require new manufacturing specialisms in West Yorkshire and a deepening of existing specialisms in Leeds

Figure: Manufacturing productivity by ITL3 and industry, West Yorkshire 2019

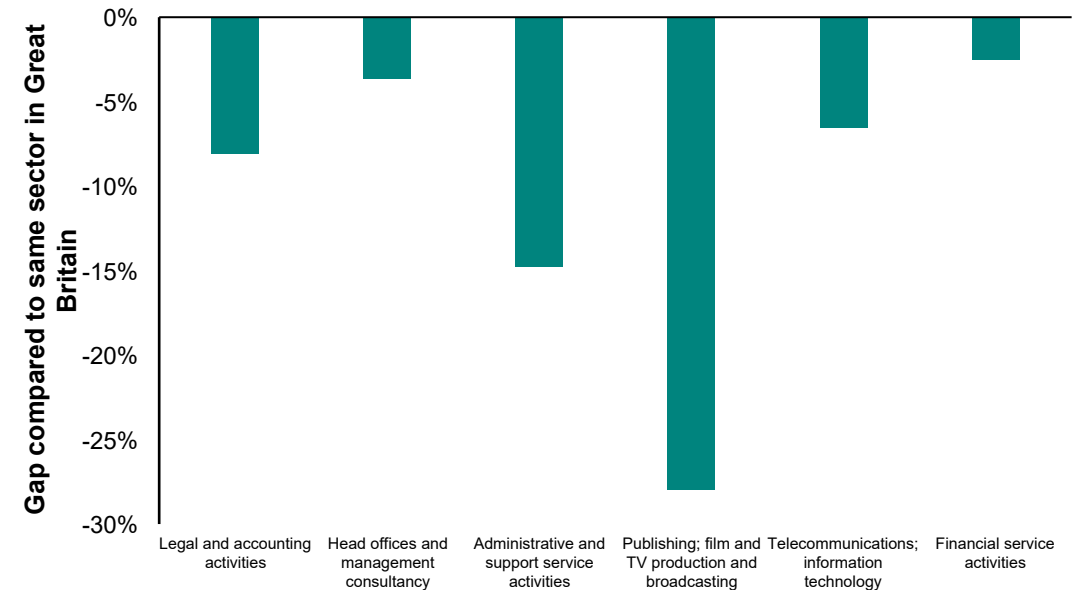
Productivity gap



Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions. ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey.

Figure: Services productivity in Leeds by its specialisms, 2019

Productivity gap



- Leeds underperforms in the services that it has a specialism. Closing the productivity gap requires making those sectors more productive. By attracting new businesses in these sectors and enabling the benefits of agglomeration.

- The main productivity differences are in sectors in which West Yorkshire is not specialised. The productivity gap is small in areas that West Yorkshire is specialised. The gap is driven by the absence of specialisms in highly productive industries like electronics (electric lighting equipment vs. electronic components) and chemicals (agrochemicals vs. pharma and petroleum).
- Closing the productivity gap will require new manufacturing-related specialisms. Closing (or widening) the gap in existing specialisms may not be enough.

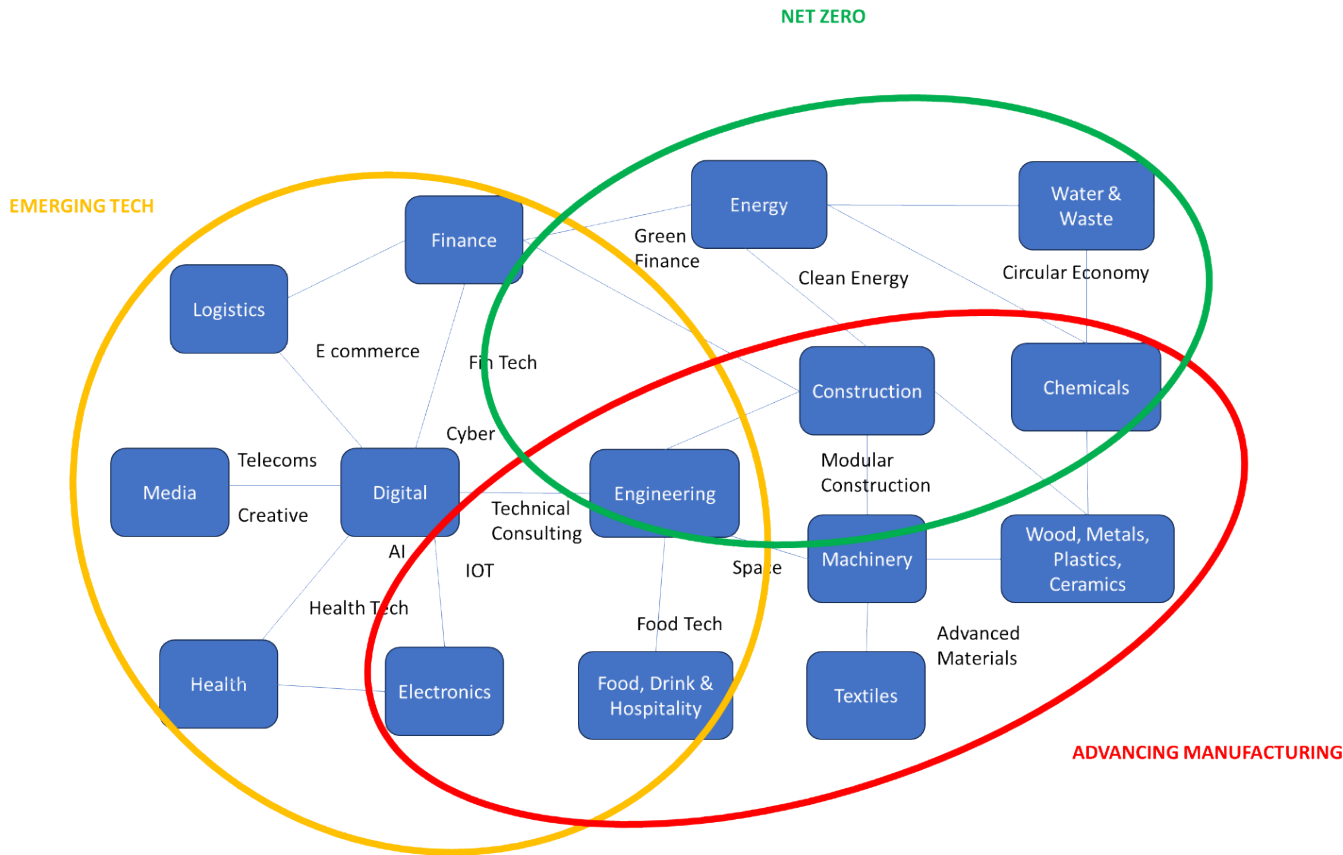
We need to dig deeper in our sector strengths and cluster analysis

Cambridge Econometrics is leading on a cluster analysis study to understand the sectors where West Yorkshire has comparative advantage and the implications for inclusive growth. The study is exploring the overlaps between traditional sectors and emerging clusters. The sector/cluster map can be divided into three main (overlapping) groups, each of which represents an opportunity for the region.

“Regional innovation clusters refer to localized groupings of enterprises of different sizes that engage in the creation of innovative goods and services. These clusters also include specialized suppliers, service providers, universities, and affiliated organizations.

Clusters are attractive because of their potential to boost the innovation and productivity of places, which are thought to be crucial to initiatives to smooth spatial inequalities and level up left behind places (Sunley et al. 2022). Clusters have also been found to increase regional resilience and speed of rebound from shocks and downturns (Delgado and Porter 2021), and so have emerged as crucial to post-pandemic recovery.”

We need to dig deeper in our sector strengths – cluster analysis



Advancing Manufacturing: All manufacturing value chains have the potential to be advanced: that is, to use innovative, cutting edge, high-tech, processes. The greatest opportunity for productivity enhancement often lies in sectors such as food and drink, textiles, and materials processing. West Yorkshire has a lot of these categories of firms.

Emerging Tech – Service Sector Crossovers: There's clearly a synergy happening between Leeds' traditional service sector strengths in Finance, Legal, Education, Health, and its strong and innovative digital sector, leading to the emergence of a number of innovative cross-over sectors (fin tech, health tech, etc).

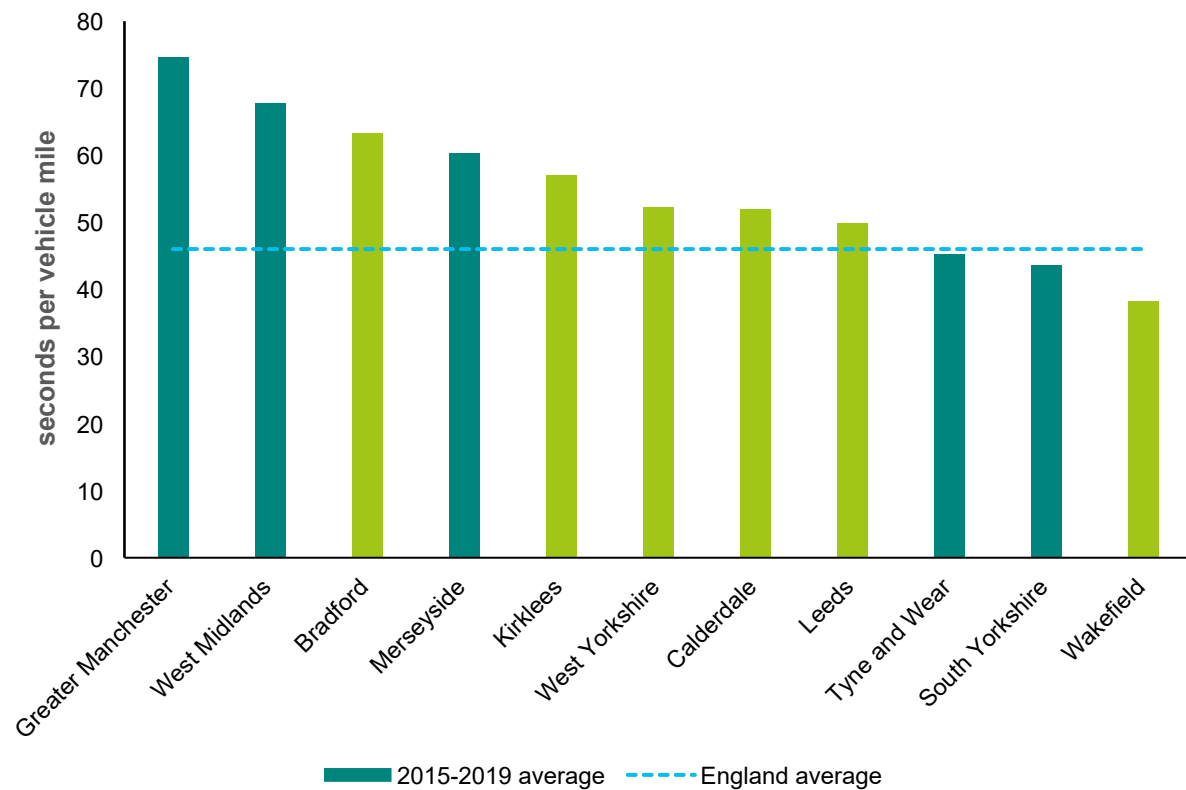
Net Zero: Of the five main Net Zero initiatives (energy, transport, built environment, industry and land use), West Yorkshire has the sectoral specialisations to lead on two (built environment and industry) and to contribute to the technology supply chains of others (transport, energy and land use).

The Enablers

Connectivity is constraining West Yorkshire's economic activity. Roads are congested and pre-pandemic rail close to capacity

Figure: Average delay on locally managed A roads, seconds per vehicle mile (2015-2019 average)

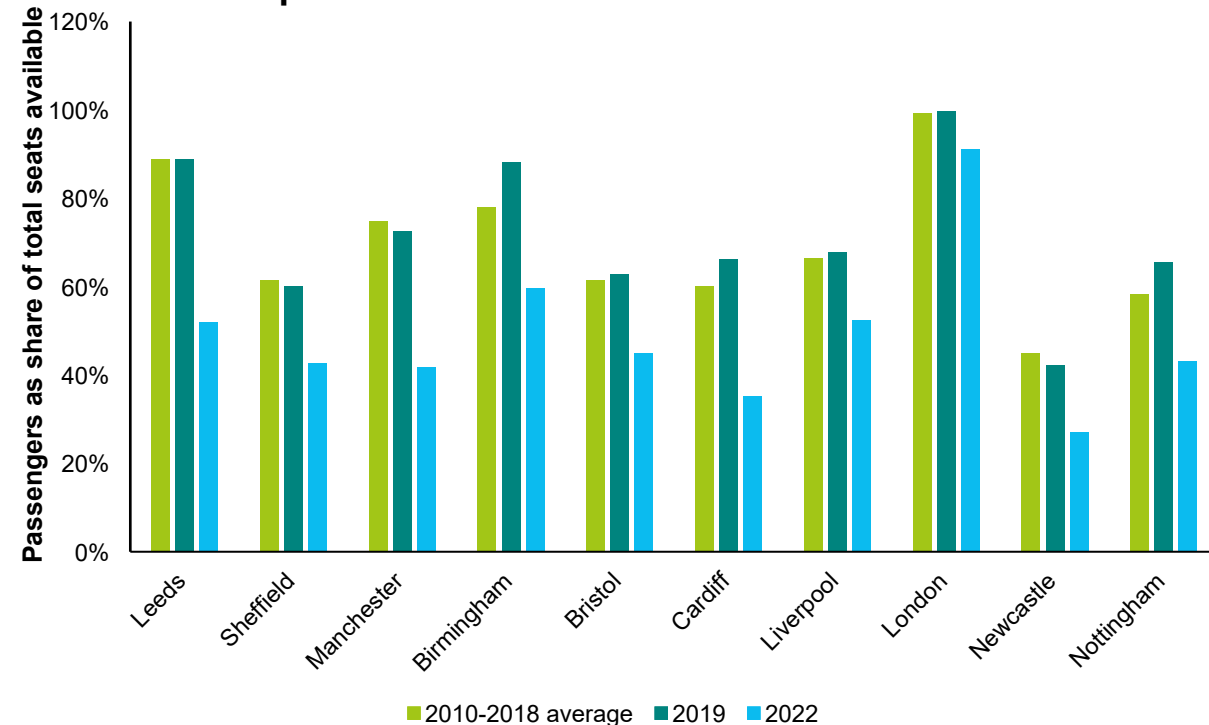
Average delay on locally managed 'A' roads



Source: DfT, Historic SRN and Local 'A' roads travel time data.

Figure: AM peak rail arrivals (07:00 to 09:59), passengers as share of seats in main stations (2010-2022)

Rail use at AM peak arrivals

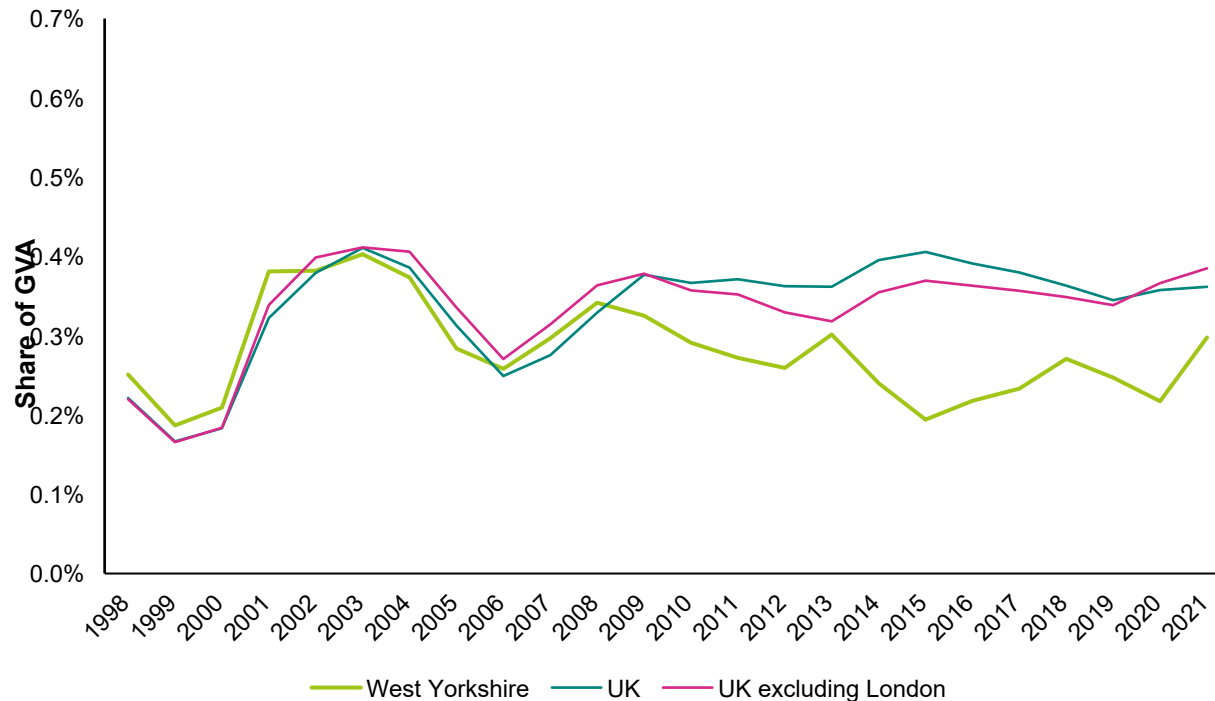


Source: DfT, Rail passenger numbers and crowding on weekdays (RAI02).
Note: Central station in all cities except London, which it includes

Last decade characterised by lack of transport investment at the local level

Figure: Local government transport infrastructure investment, West Yorkshire and UK (1998-2021)

Local government transport infrastructure

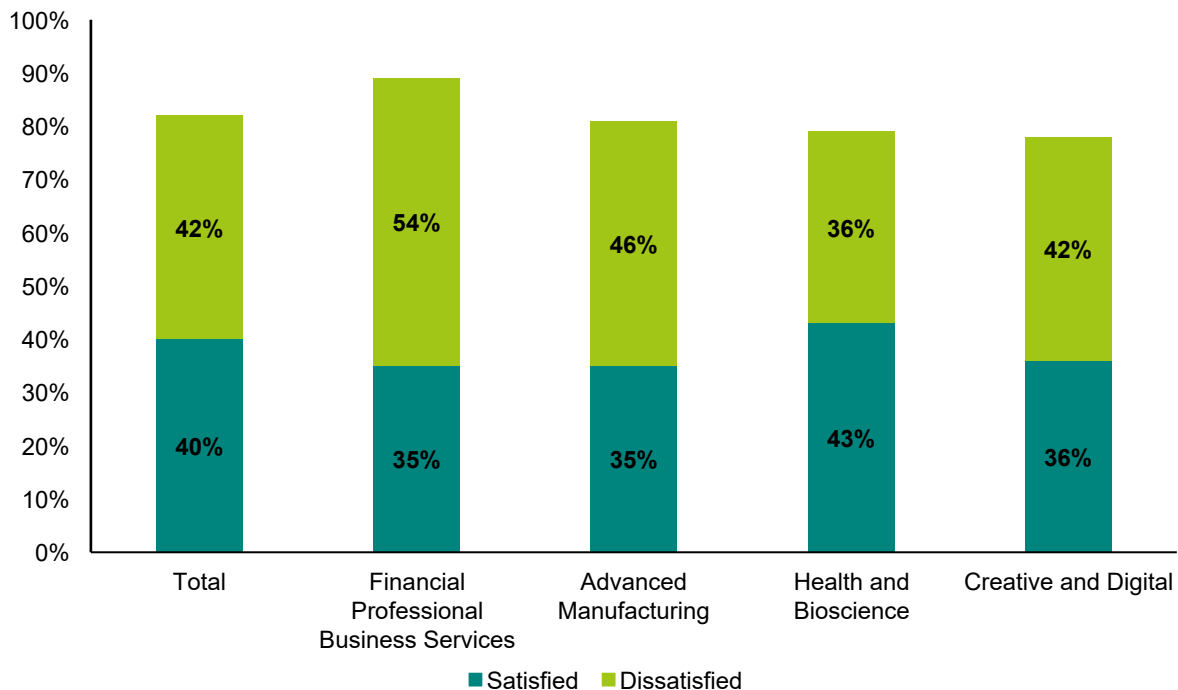


- After the financial crisis, West Yorkshire investment in transport infrastructure (local government) started diverging with the national average.
- This trend highlights the importance of transport investment to unlock other economic benefits, in an economy seems to be constrained in terms of connectivity.
- In 2021, there has been an increase – converging with the national average.
- Local government spending, excluding transport, has been performing in line with average.
- Low connectivity by lack of investment has been flagged by the [National Infrastructure Commission](#) (£15bn until 2040 in Leeds and other three other large cities).

Source: ONS, Experimental regional gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) estimates by asset type. ONS, GVA at ITL2, current price estimates: 1998 to 2020. West Yorkshire Combined Authority Calculations.

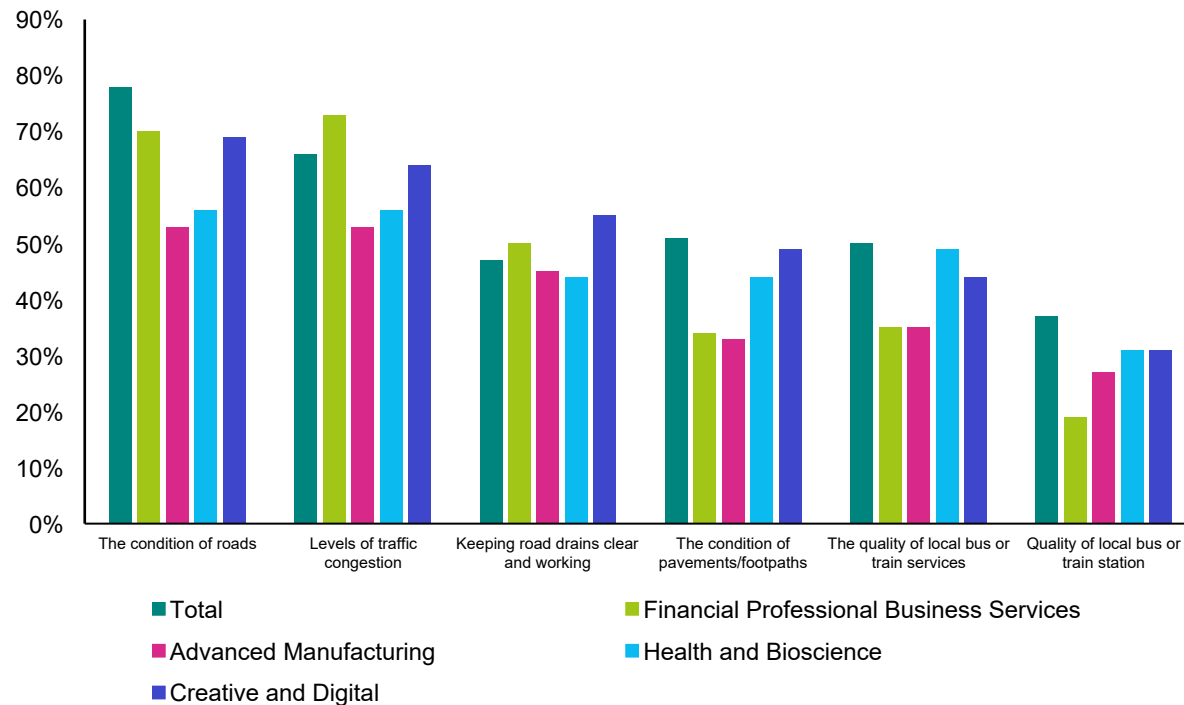
Several relevant sectors with connectivity satisfaction below average

Figure: How satisfied are you with the quality of local highways and public transport infrastructure immediately surrounding your business premises?



Source: West Yorkshire Business Survey, 2023.

Figure: Thinking about the quality of the local highways and public transport infrastructure immediately surrounding your business premises, which of the following do you think need improvement?

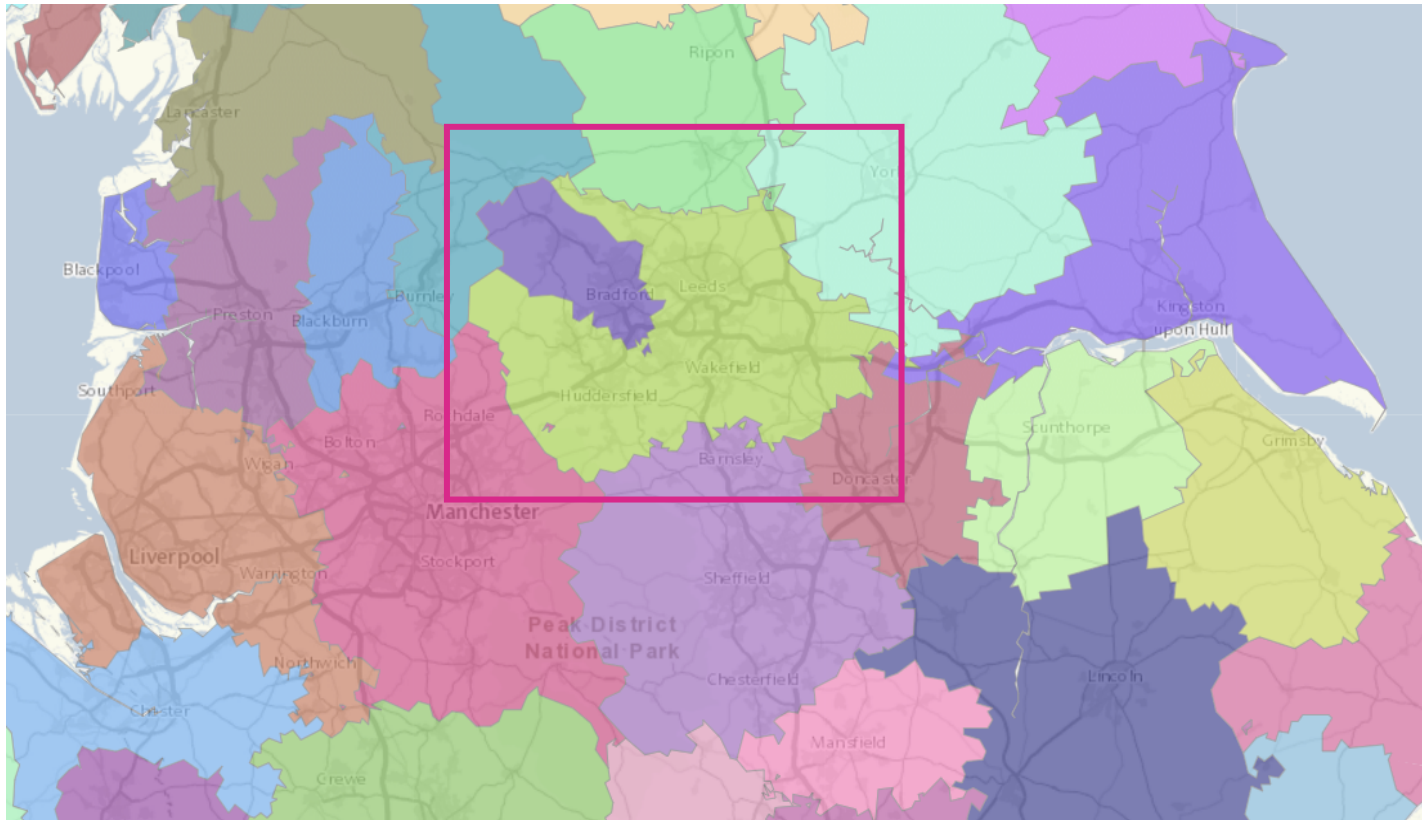


Source: West Yorkshire Business Survey, 2023.

- Sectors that are expected to play an important role in closing the productivity gap, like advanced manufacturing or professional services, report higher dissatisfaction with connectivity than average. This highlights the link between productivity convergence and connectivity.
- All sectors have major concerns about road quality and congestion. Service sectors (financial and professionals business services or creative and digital) also flag, to a lower extent, public transport as a concern.

Interventions should contribute to the integration of the combined authority as a labour market

Figure: Alternative Travel to Work Areas, Full time employed (2011)

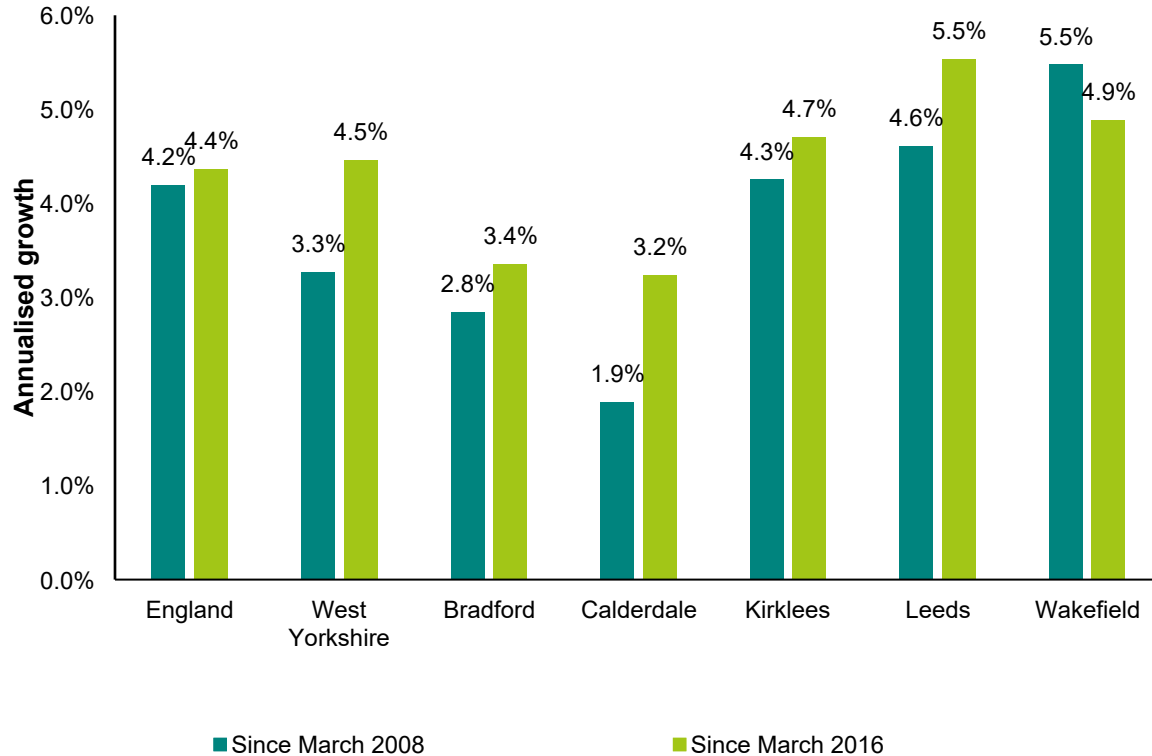


- Despite the census showing that there are plenty of flows between local authorities, analysis of Travel to Work Areas (2011) for full time workers suggest that Bradford's labour market is not as integrated into West Yorkshire as other areas.
- This is likely to be driven by a combination of factors like connectivity (road congestion and rail capacity) but also the level of skills of the workforce to benefit from longer commutes.
- Other CA areas do not necessarily match their TTWA (GM and Wigan, or Doncaster and Sheffield) but difference in Bradford seems more significant.

Housing affordability can be an emerging issue in some parts of West Yorkshire. House prices growing faster than national average in recent years, especially in Leeds

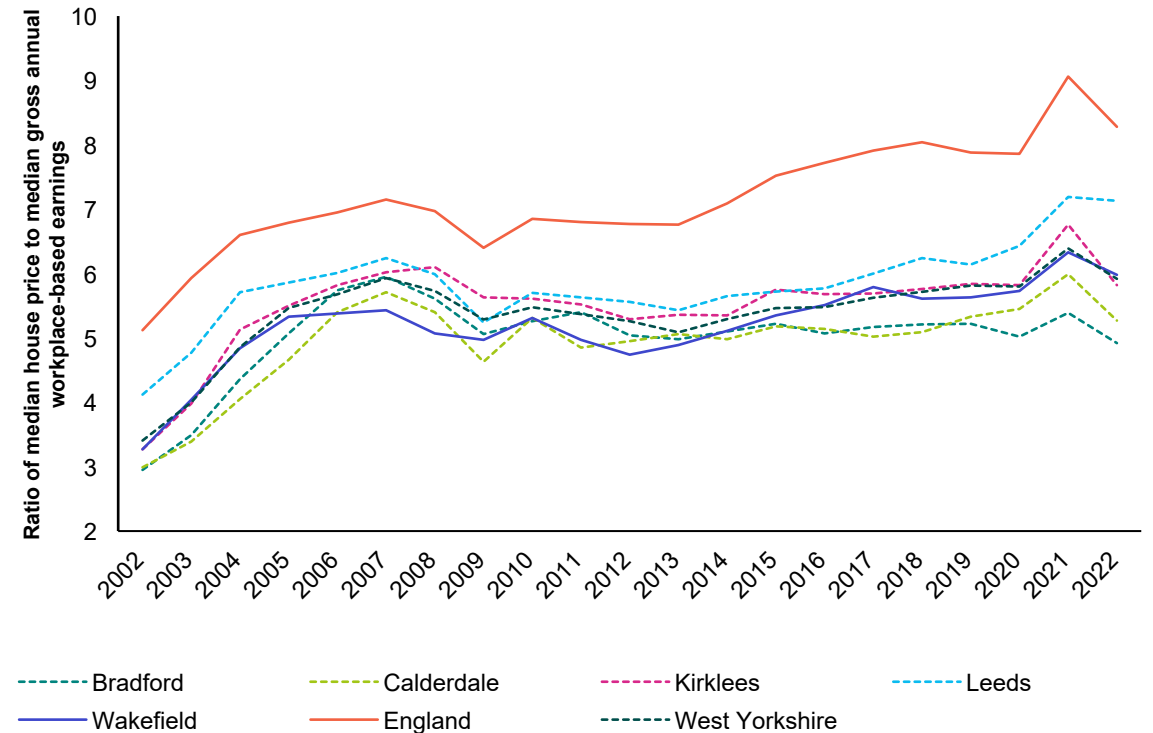
Figure: Median house price paid (March 1995 to March 2023)

Median house price paid, growth



Private rental market summary statistics in England.

Figure: Affordability of House Prices – ratio of median house price to median annual wage (workplace-based), 2002-2022

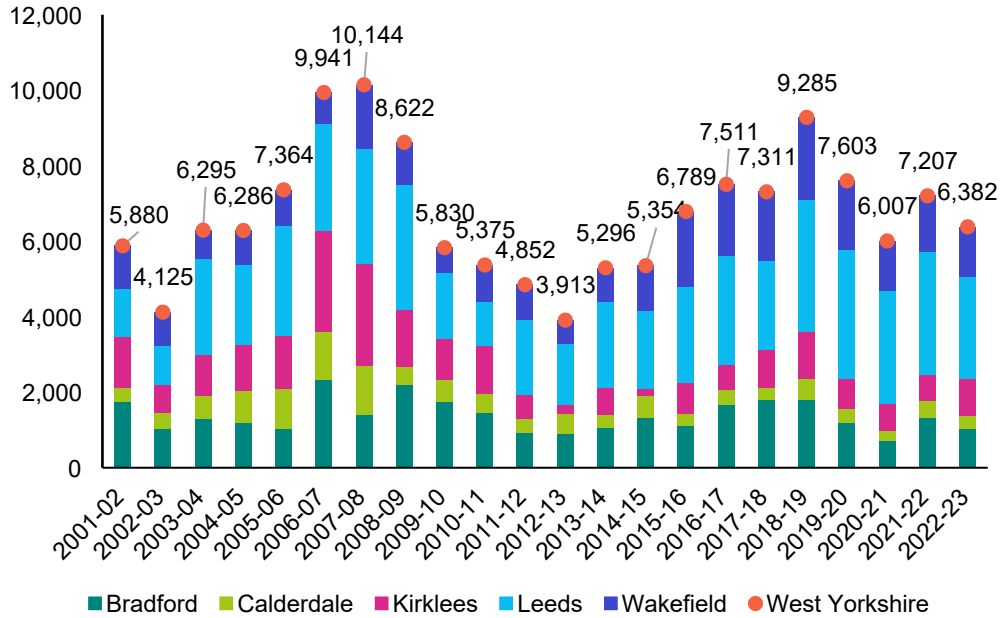


Source: Housing affordability in England and Wales, ONS

- On top of that, housing affordability needs to be framed as a potential economic constraint.
- Despite significant differences across local authorities, house prices have been rising. House prices have been growing faster than average in recent years mostly driven by Leeds, Wakefield and Kirklees.

West Yorkshire had a construction boom in the decade before the crisis, now converged with national average

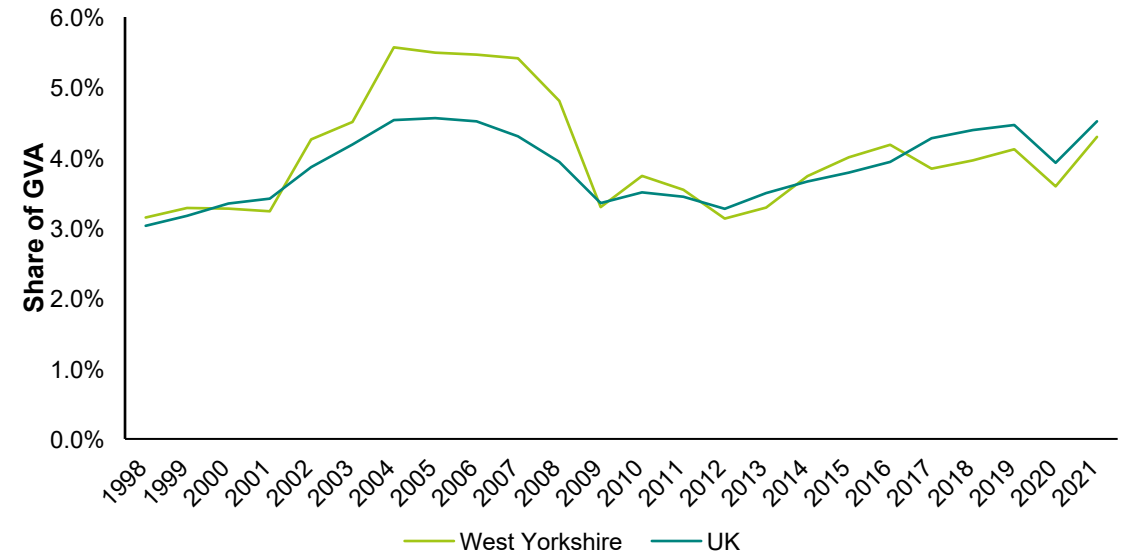
Figure: Net additional dwellings, West Yorkshire (2001/2002 to 2021/2022)



Source: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Net additional dwellings by local authority district, England 2001-02 to 2021-22.

Figure: Gross fixed capital formation dwellings, West Yorkshire and UK (1998-2021)

Investment: dwellings

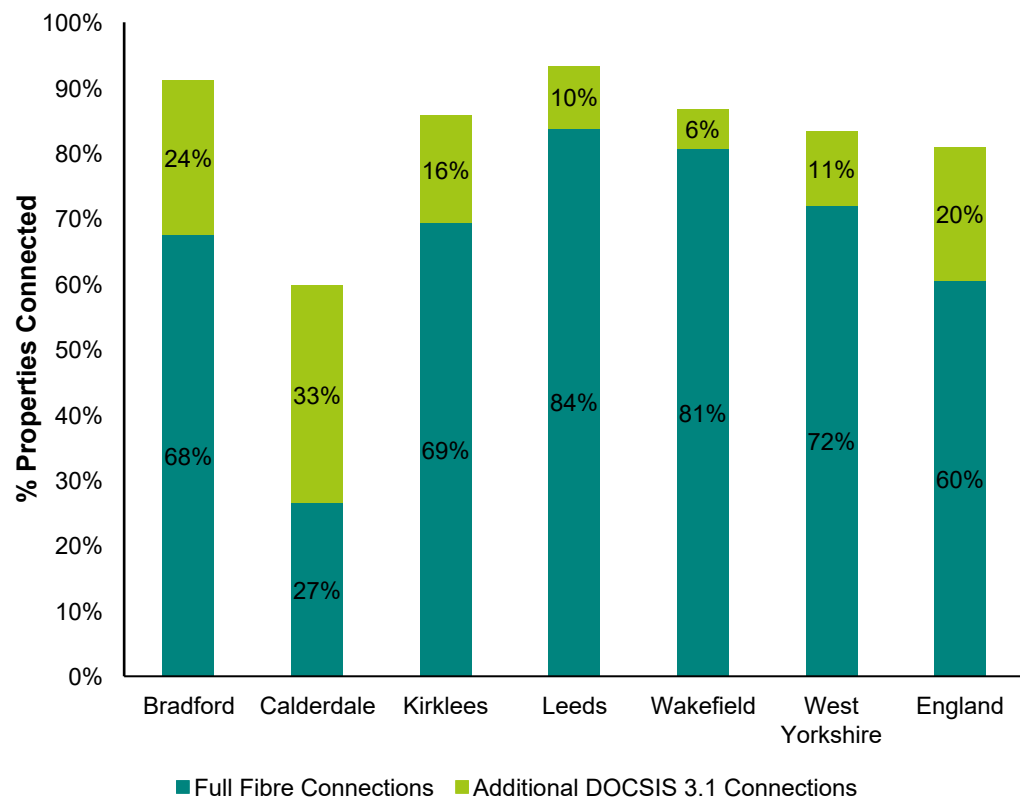


Source: ONS, Experimental regional gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) estimates by asset type. ONS, GVA at ITL2, current price estimates: 1998 to 2020. Dwellings include New dwellings use Barbour ABI data from 2010 onwards, with earlier estimates backcast using construction output survey, completions and house prices. Contract improvements use data from the construction output survey and housing stock estimates; Hidden improvements use estimates of mixed income in the construction industry; Local government capital expenditure
West Yorkshire Combined Authority Calculations.

- The net additional dwellings and investment figures support the idea that West Yorkshire had a construction boom prior the financial crisis.
- Delivering new homes, in the right places, is necessary to keep West Yorkshire affordable. That would help in both attracting and retaining talent.

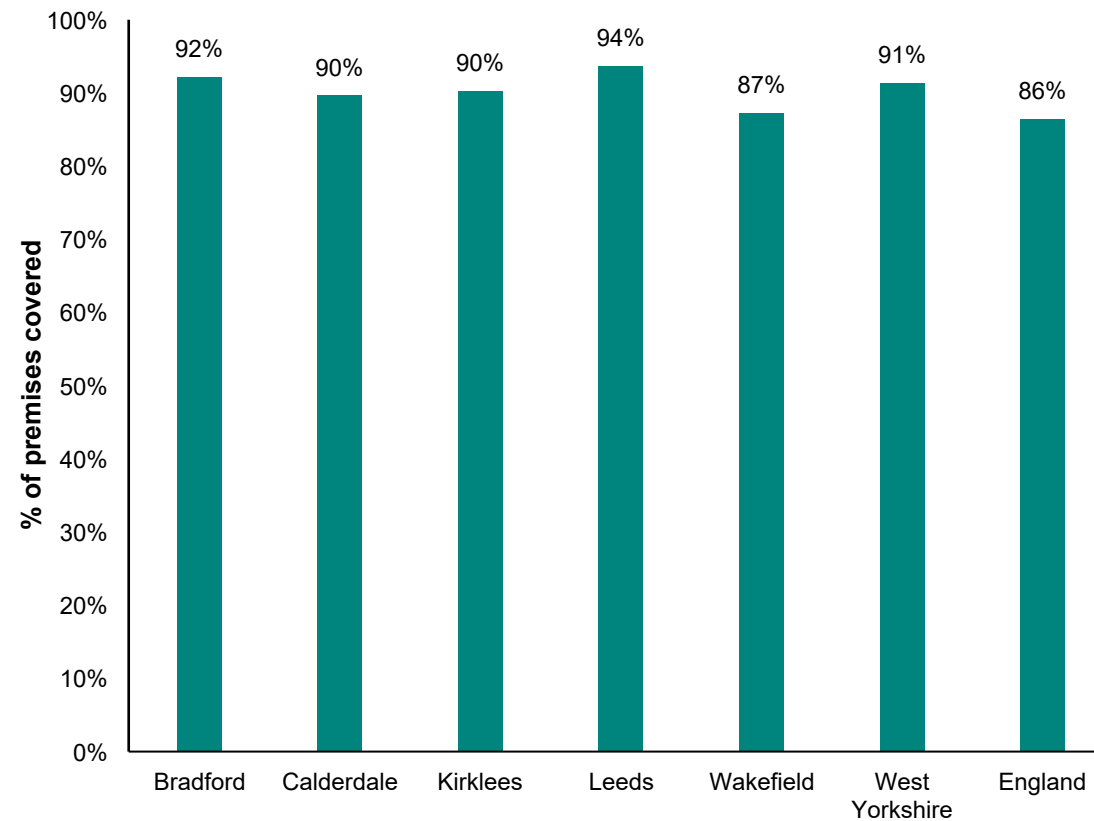
Digital connectivity indicators above England's average, except for Calderdale

Figure: Premises with gigabit-capable fixed internet coverage by type



Source: ThinkBroadband, 04/2024

Figure: 4G premises (indoor) coverage from all providers



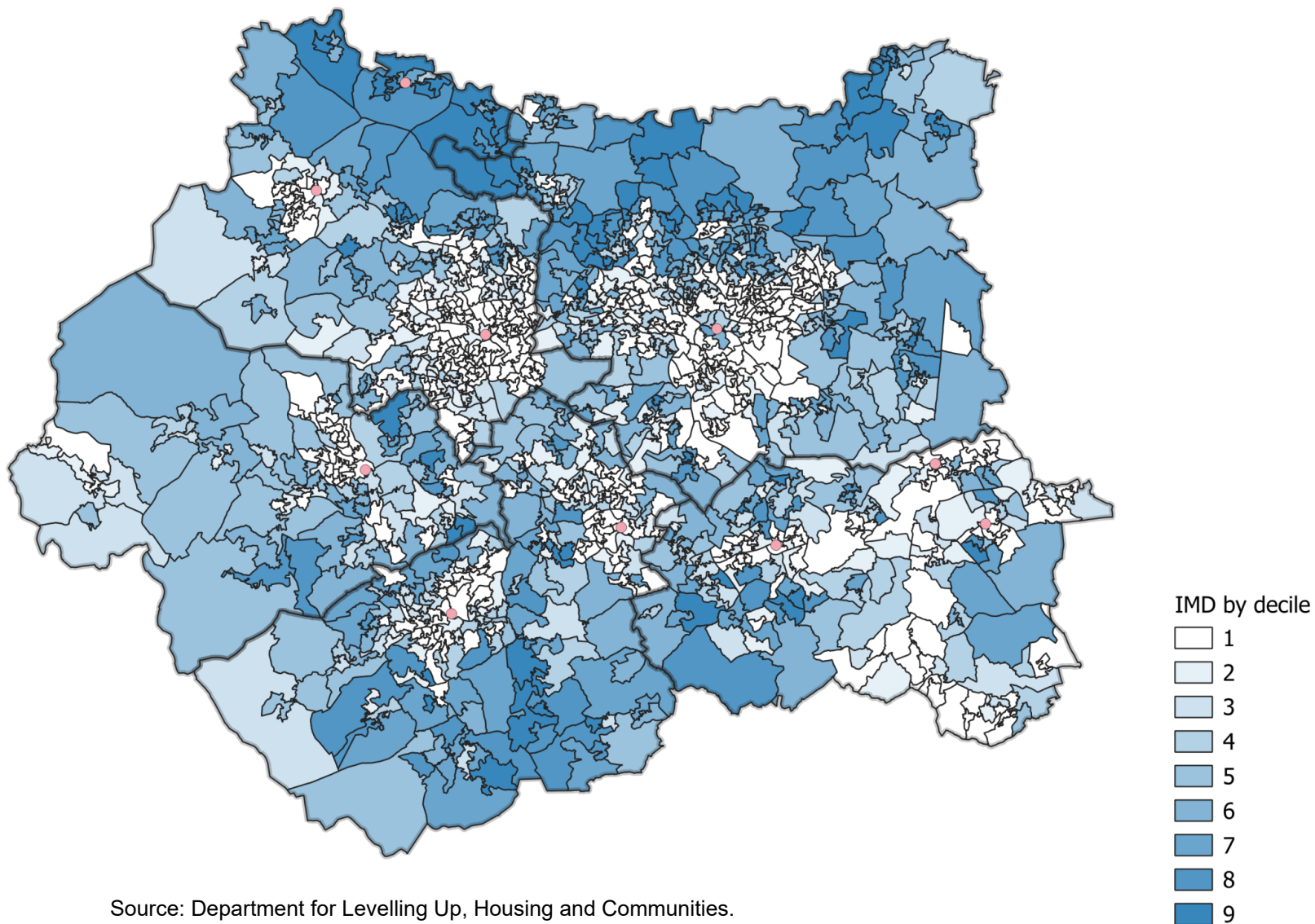
Source: OfCom Connected Regions Report, Summer 2023.

- This is likely to be explained by Calderdale being relatively rural. In a context of hybrid work, this can make this local authority less competitive than the remaining ones.
- Digital connectivity is improving rapidly in West Yorkshire, Calderdale included.

Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

It's not all about physical proximity to opportunity as deprivation shows

Figure: English Indices of Deprivation 2019 - LSOA Level, by decile



There are areas nearby the centre of Leeds that do not benefit that much from its productivity, which highlights the importance of looking at inclusive growth when trying to close the productivity gap.

It's not all about proximity to opportunities as this figure shows.

Closing productivity gap alone likely to boost wages at the top, unlikely to bring inclusive growth alone

Figure: Workplace median pay, full time workers by Metropolitan County 2019-2022

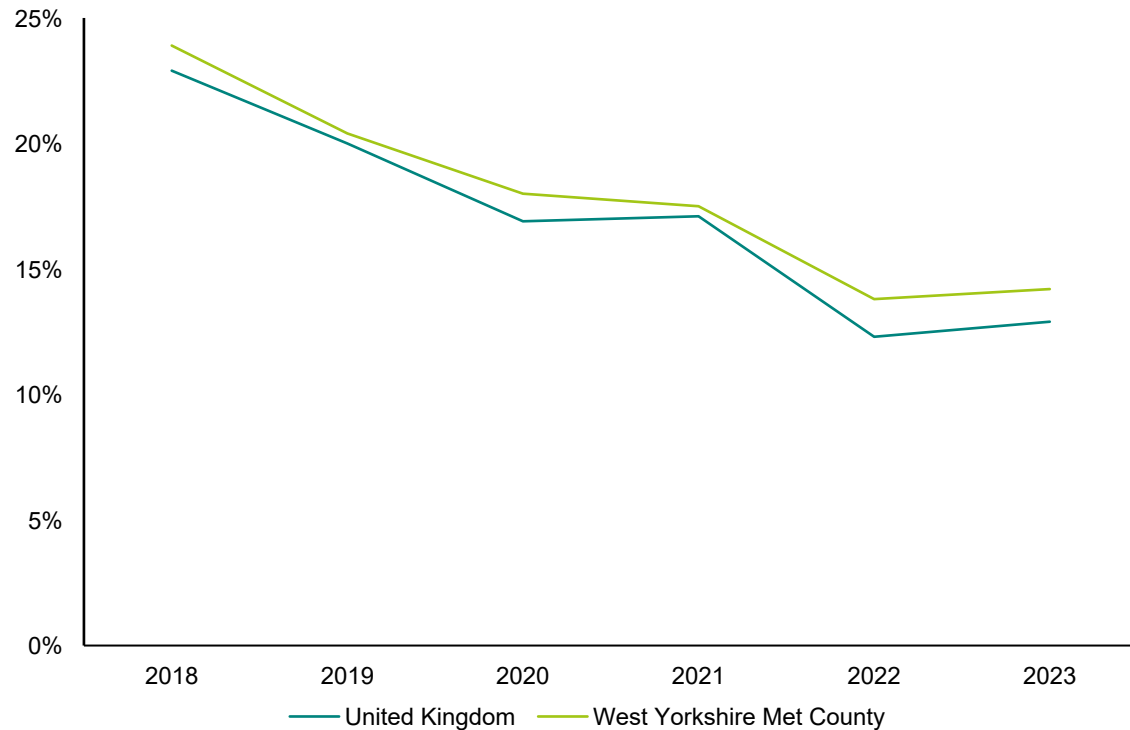
Differences by wage distribution



- The same way the productivity gap is driven by the lack of high performing firms, a similar trend is observed in wages, with the largest gap at the top of the distribution.
- The wage differences between West Yorkshire and the national average are **mostly driven by lack of highly paid jobs.**

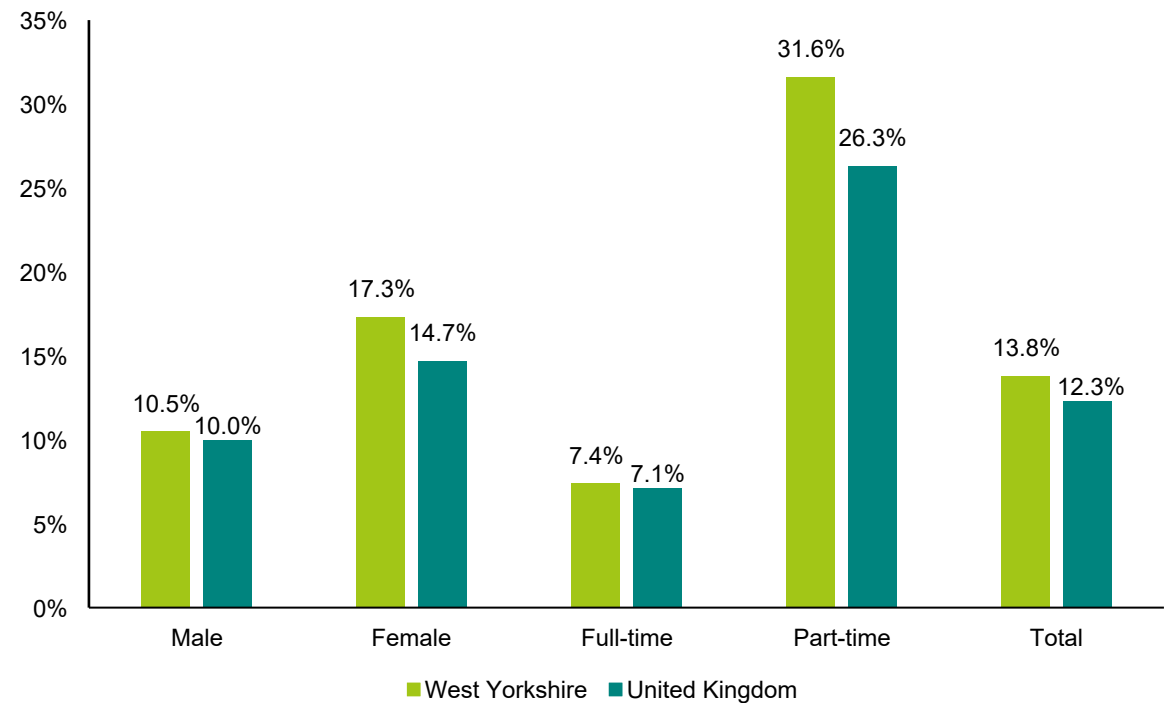
Higher than average numbers of workers earn below the living wage, this is especially high for women and part time workers

Figure: Proportion of all employee jobs paying below the Living Wage Foundation's real living wage rate (2018-2023)



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS. Note: 2023 is provisional data.

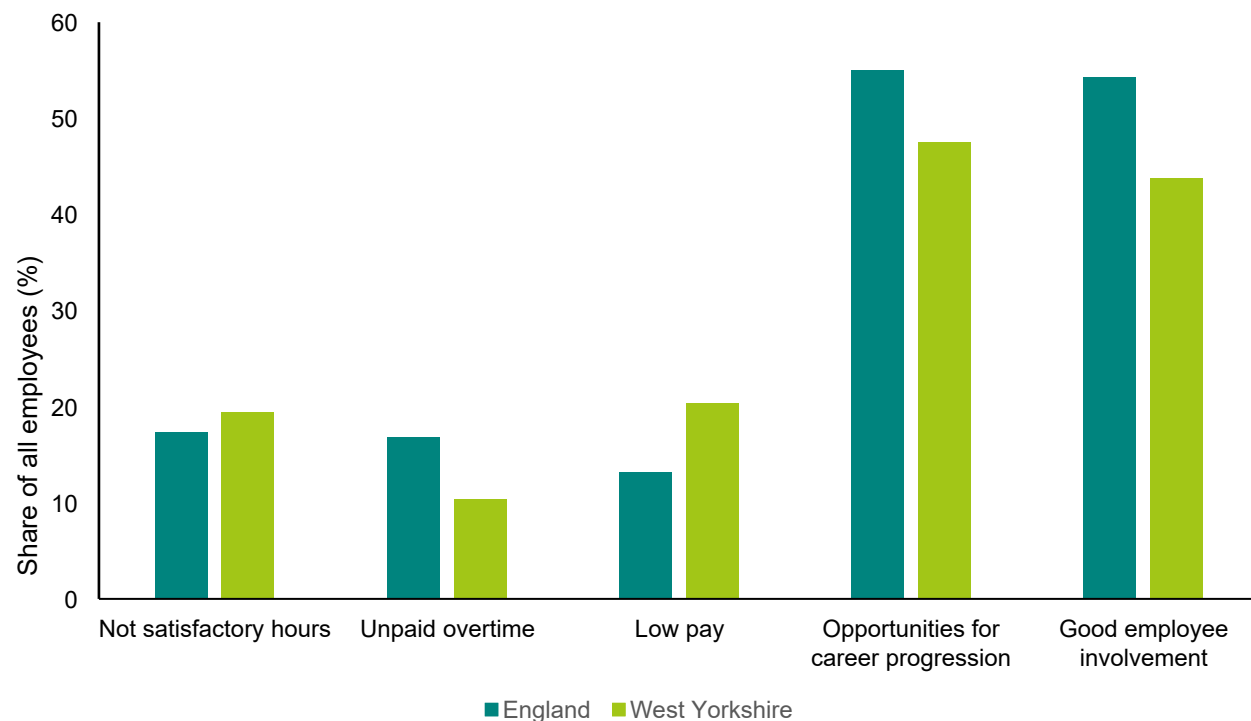
Figure: Proportion of all employee jobs paying below the Living Wage Foundation's real living wage rate by sex and contract (2022)



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS, 2022

Lack of desired hours and progression opportunities are higher in West Yorkshire than in England

Figure: Job quality indicators, January to December 2021

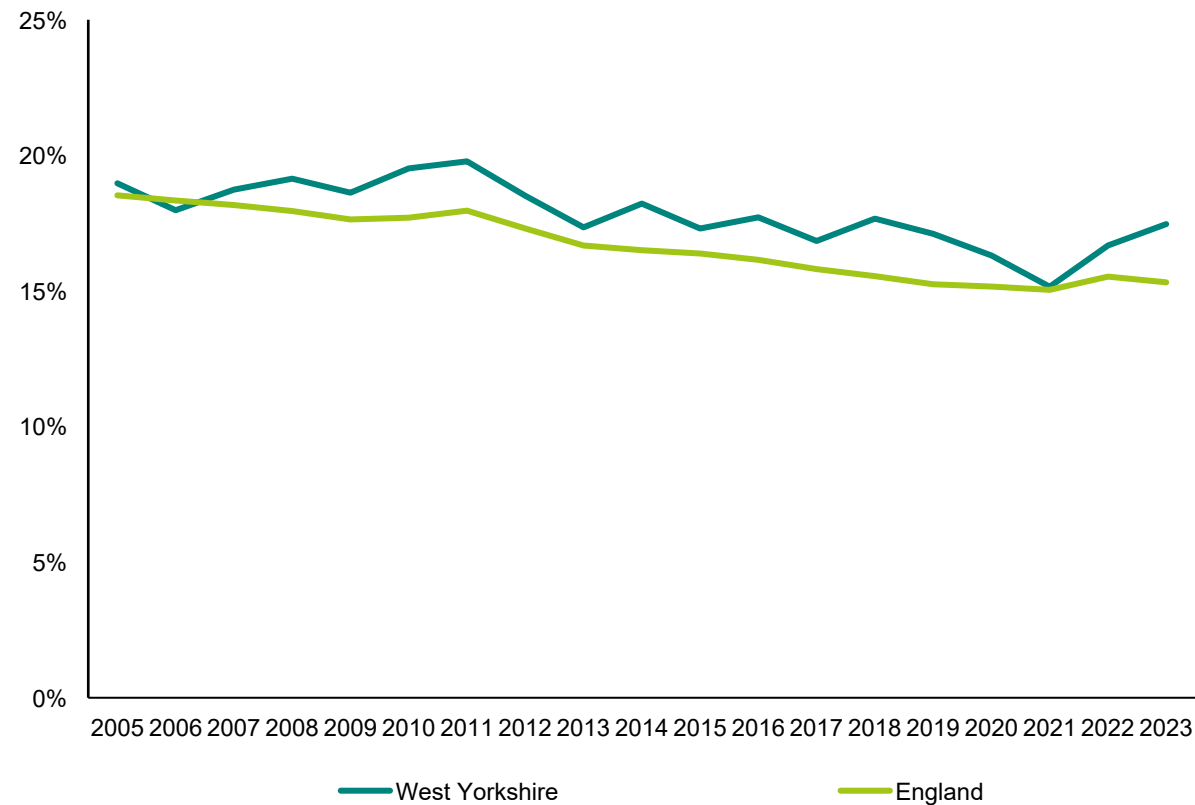


- First, part time work is more prevalent for workers with lower qualifications, which limits income earned by workers.
- This may be a choice, but [survey](#) work suggests on the gap between male and female part-time rates suggests it is driven by care responsibilities.
- The UK has one of the highest childcare costs in the [OECD](#).
- Working towards improving childcare likely to promote income gains at the bottom of the income distribution and allow West Yorkshire to make the most out of its talent.

Source: Jobs quality indicators in the UK - hours, pay, contracts, opportunities, and involvement: 2021, Office for National Statistics. West Yorkshire figures estimated using local authority statistics and weighted them using the number of employees provided by Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).

A large share of inactive due to sickness and looking after family and home

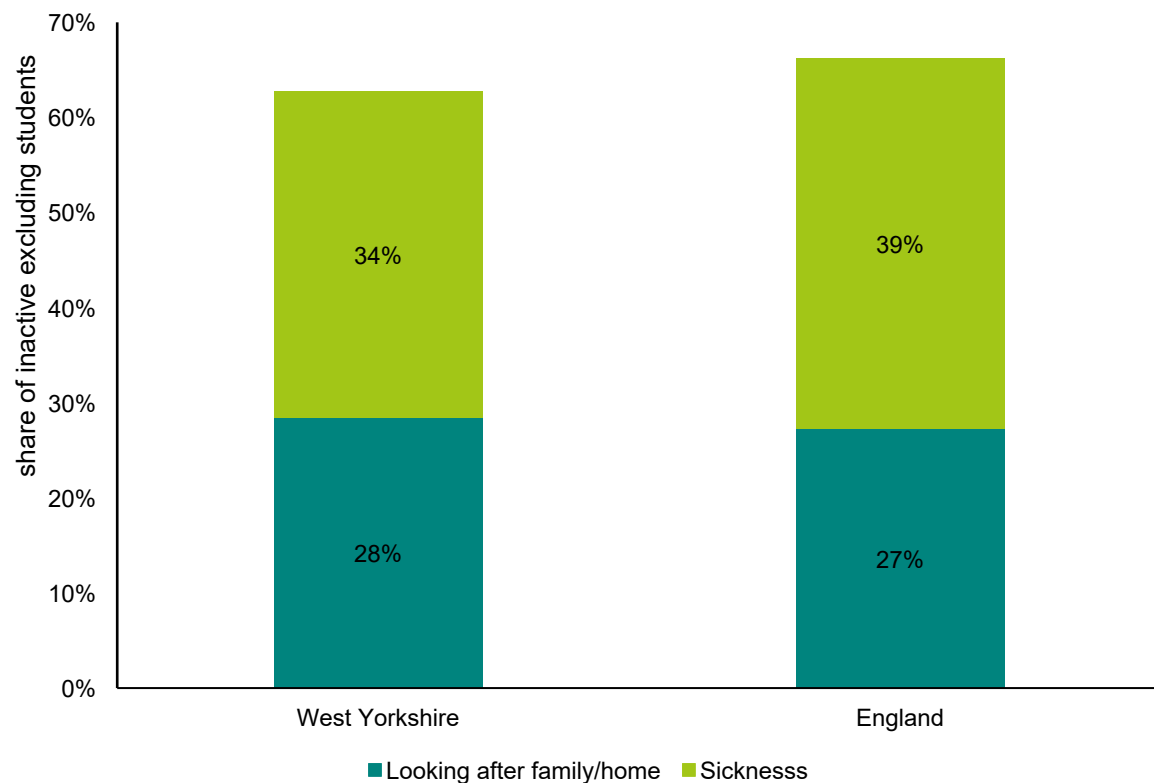
Figure: Share of economic inactive (excluding students), annual (October to September)



- Share of inactivity (excluding students) rising and diverging from the national average in recent years. After
- Excluding students, there are around 250,000 people classified as inactive in West Yorkshire.

A large share of inactive due to sickness and looking after family and home

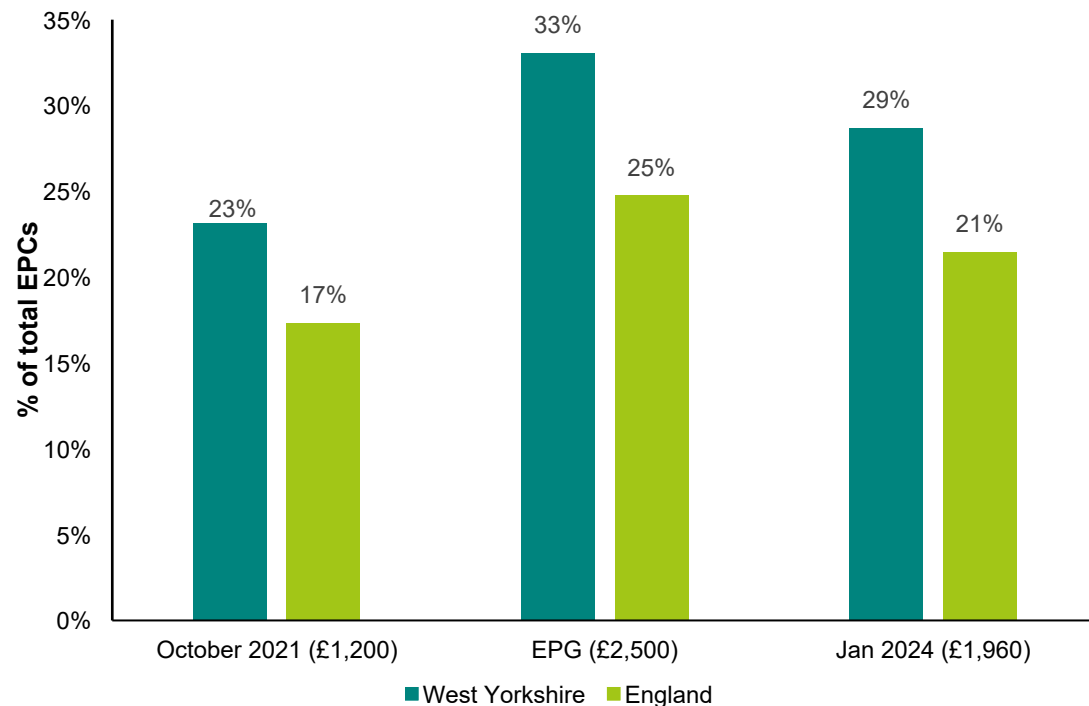
Figure: Share of economic inactive (excluding students) by reason of inactivity, Oct 2022-Sep 2023



- Economic activity is falling but still above national average.
- Excluding students, there are around 250,000 people classified as inactive in West Yorkshire.
- From those, almost two thirds are inactive due to sickness or looking after family/home. It is below the national average but still significant.
- Therefore, interventions around health and provision of care could be useful levers to promote inclusive growth.
- Dealing with this issues increases the number of people who can benefit from job opportunities.

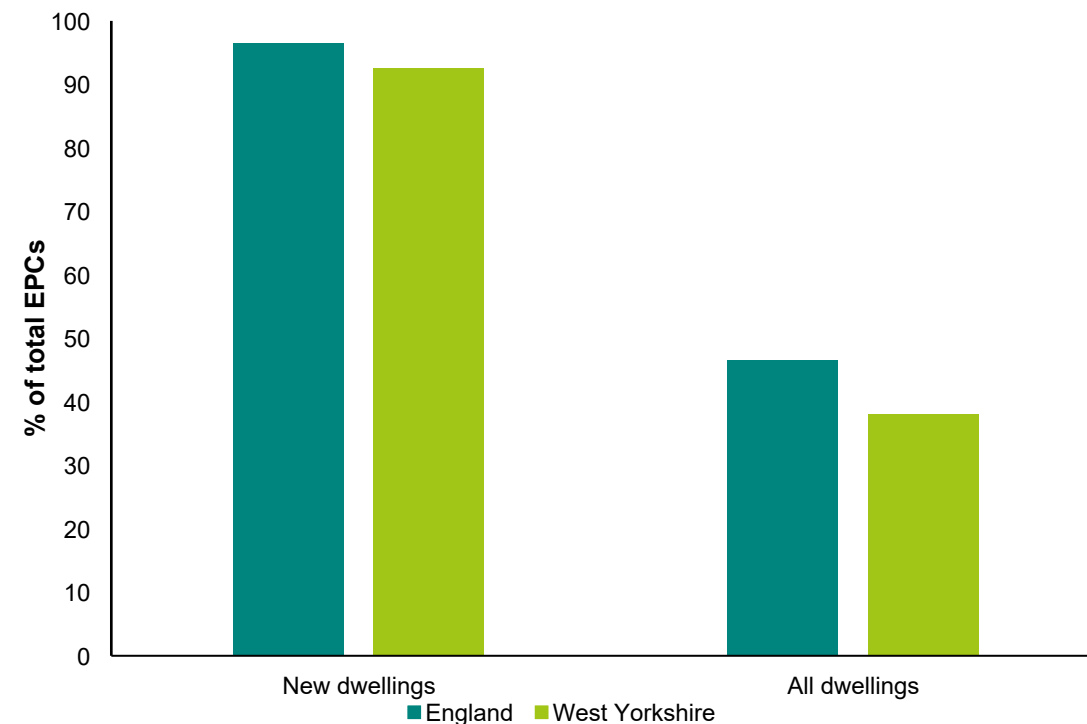
Dealing with fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency is another way of keep cost of living low

Figure: Proportion of households in fuel poverty, estimates based on End Fuel Poverty Coalition figures



Source: West Yorkshire Combined Authority estimates, based on End Fuel Poverty Coalition figures. This figures differ, methodologically, from ONS [Low-Income Low Energy Efficiency](#) (LILEE) methodology.

Figure: Energy Performance Certificates by local authority, new and existing dwellings, as of March 2023



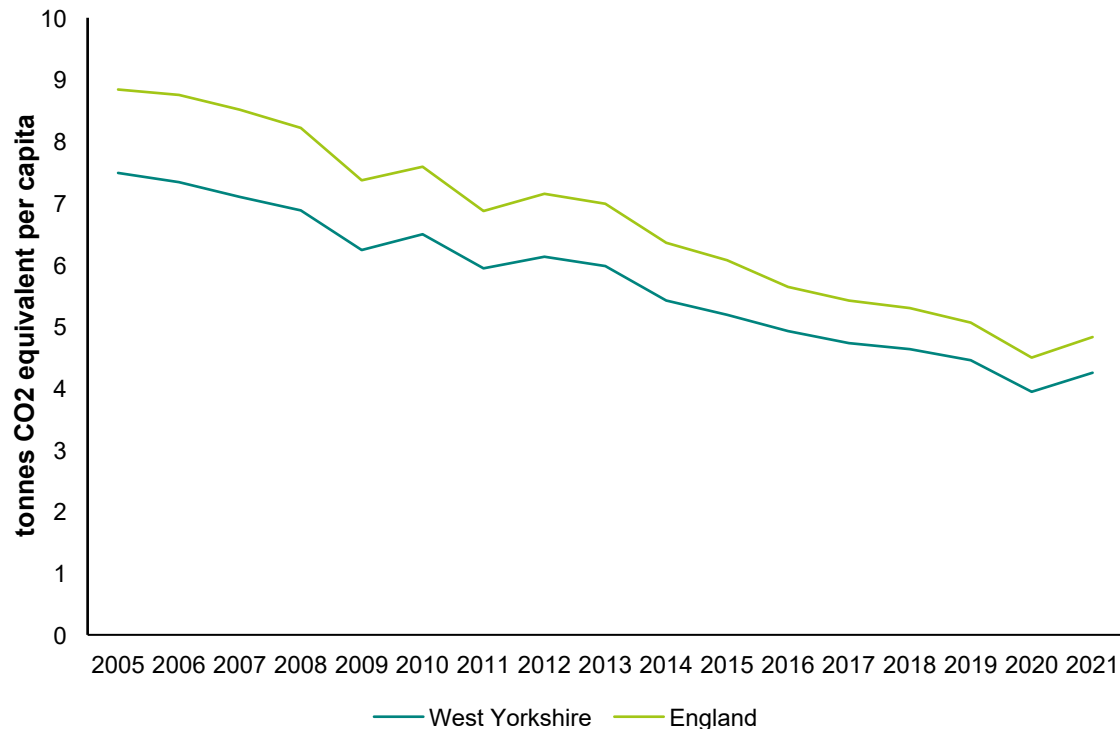
Source: Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C or above, England and Wales, ONS. All new dwellings registered over the whole decade.

Making West Yorkshire's housing stock more efficient will i) reduce fuel poverty and energy bills ii) help reaching net zero transition.

New dwellings are mostly efficient, still below the national average, but there is a huge scope to improve efficiency of existing dwellings. West Yorkshire has the target of retrofitting 680,000 homes to at least an EPC C rating and installing 665,000 domestic heat pumps.

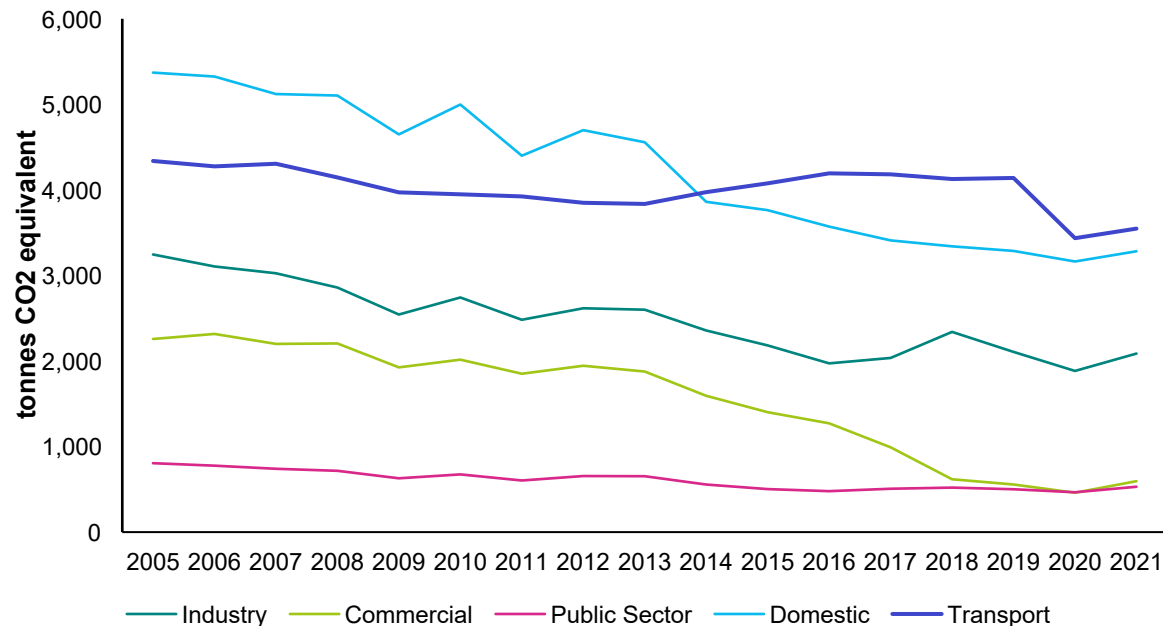
Carbon emissions falling in the last two decades, driven by industrial, commercial and domestic emissions. Little progress in transport

Figure: Greenhouse gas emissions per capita, (2005-2021)



Source: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2021, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023.

Figure: Greenhouse gas emissions by sector (2005-2021)

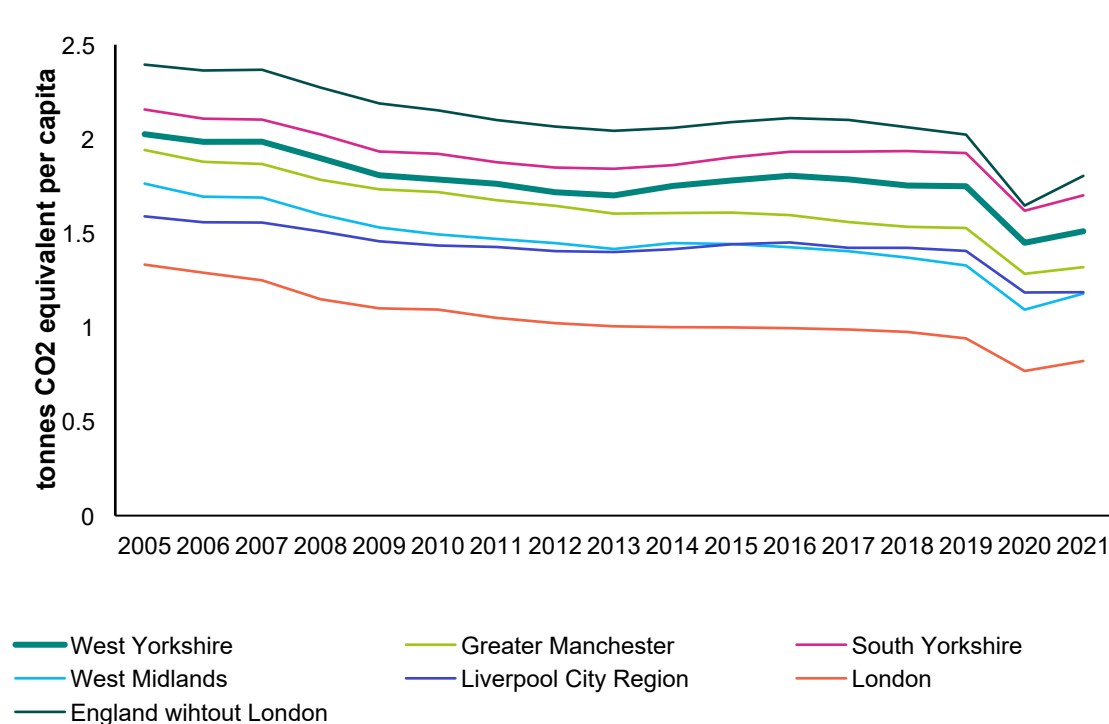


Source: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2021, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023.

- West Yorkshire has seen its emissions per capita falling, like the rest of the country, and below the national average.
- Transport emissions rising and industrial relatively stable.

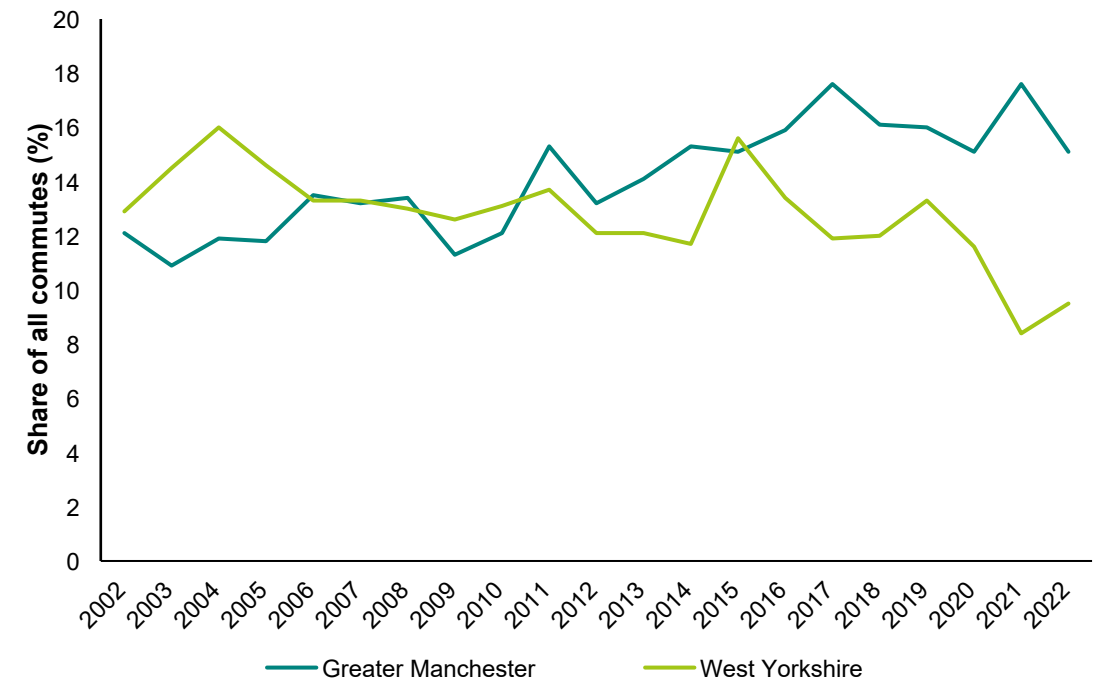
Transport-related emissions stopped their gradual decline and diverged from Greater Manchester

Figure: Transport-related greenhouse gas emissions per capita (2005-2021)



Source: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2021, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023

Figure: Public transport as usual method of travel to work by region of workplace (2002-2022)



Source: DfT, Modal comparisons (TSGB01).

- Transport-related emissions in large urban areas are lower than the national average, but West Yorkshire emissions are relatively high within the Combined Authorities.
- On top of that, the period between 2013 and 2019, emissions rose and diverged from Greater Manchester. Public transport commutes in Greater Manchester rose in that period.

A call for evidence to understand an inclusive economy

Building our understanding of an inclusive economy

A call for evidence was launched through the [Y-PERN](#) network of Yorkshire and Humber universities. A roundtable was held to shape the questions around three core themes for an inclusive economy. The following institutions were involved in the Roundtable and subsequent call for evidence:

- Leeds Arts University
- Leeds Beckett University
- Leeds Conservatoire
- Leeds Trinity University
- University of Bradford
- University of Huddersfield
- University of Leeds.

Building our understanding of an inclusive economy

Theme one: Childcare

Background: Childcare costs in the UK are amongst the highest in the developed world. This is having an impact on parents who would like to work but for whom it is no longer economically viable. Barriers to childcare are having a disproportionate impact on women's participation in the Labour market.

Rationale: to understand the size and scope of childcare provision in West Yorkshire including challenges facing the sector and where barriers exist, understanding costs to the economy including lack of childcare availability for lower income families.

Findings: Responses focussed on the interrelated issues of funding, infrastructure, childcare as work, and the implications of childcare issues for employment and the job market.

Next steps: Building on the call for evidence, funding has been secured for a structured deep-dive to map the system provision of childcare in West Yorkshire and the impact this has on the regional economy.

Theme Two: The Informal Economy

Background: More research is needed to understand the informal economy of West Yorkshire and the implications this has for our policy programme. This includes wider networks across West Yorkshire.

Rationale: The call for evidence sought to understand how can small-scale entrepreneurs and informal small businesses can best be supported by local and regional government; how policy makers can 'win trust' and communicate with informal workers and to better understand the help they may need. This included the role of technology and artificial intelligence.

Findings: A wide range of responses were submitted including evidence on entrepreneurship, support for migrant Women in Yorkshire, effective ways for small-scale entrepreneurs and informal small businesses to be supported by local and regional government, and published research on flexible working practices.

Next steps: Further engagement on approaches for business support is being progressed. An evidence review on flexible working is being undertaken by the West Yorkshire Scientific Advisory Group and will be informed by evidence from this call.

Theme Three: Future of Work

Background: Policy interventions to support the future workforce need to be considered as part of emerging trends in particular the impact of AI on the future economy and what this means across all parts of the region.

Rationale: The call for evidence sought to understand what opportunities and challenges recent and potential future developments in artificial intelligence, digitalisation and remote working pose for regional economies, and the West Yorkshire economy specifically. This included examples in terms of policy interventions at regional and local levels that have extended the social and economic benefits of new working practices.

Findings: Responses highlighted the opportunities of AI for the West Yorkshire economy to address long-standing challenges around productivity, alongside the risks including disruptions to traditional labour markets. Responses also highlighted the role for policy makers to proactively shape the opportunities of AI balancing employment practices.

Next steps: alignment of the evidence with outcomes of the West Yorkshire Scientific Advisory Group evidence map on flexible working alongside further input from officers at the Combined Authority.

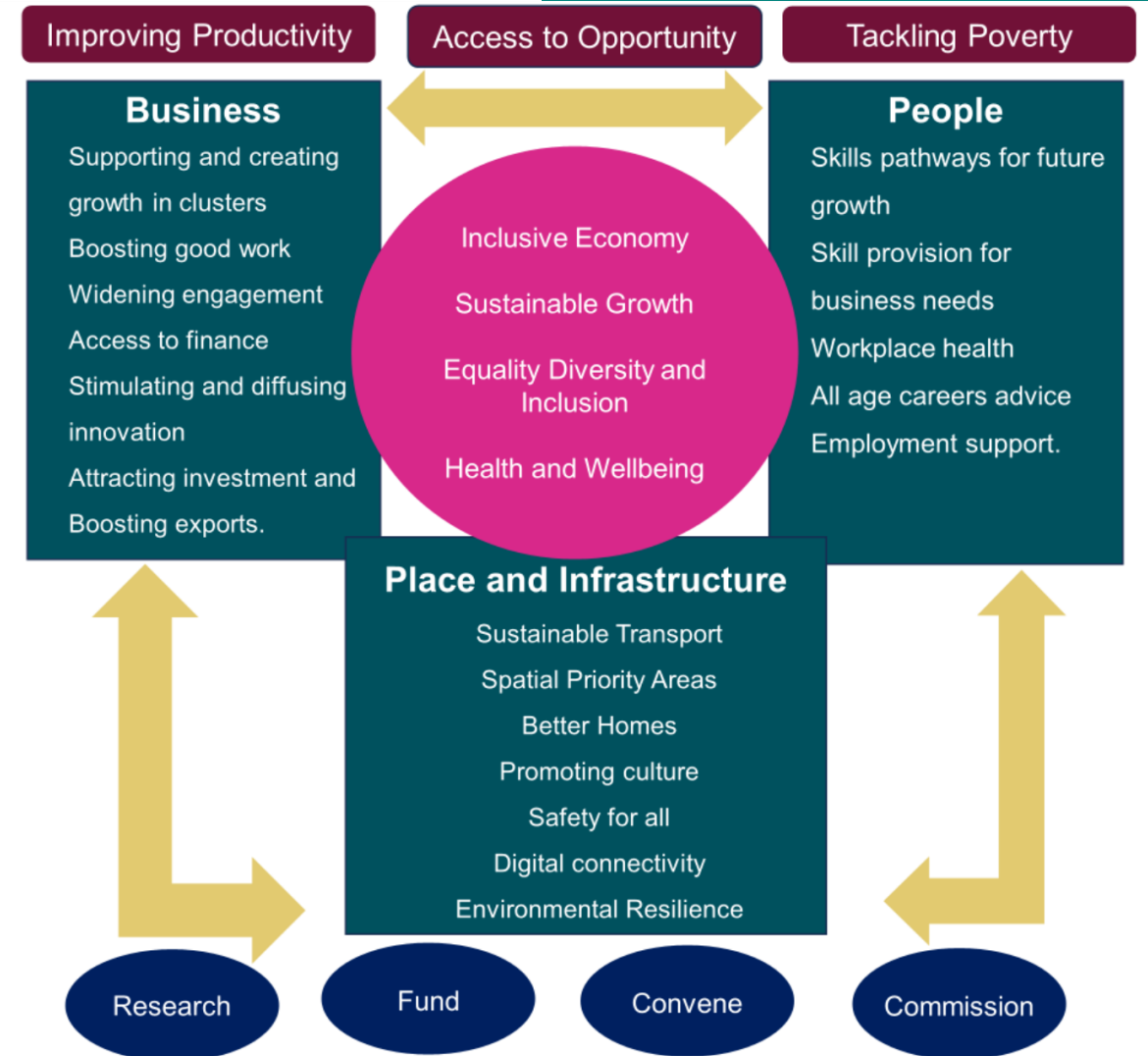
A full Bibliography with report links (where available) is included at the end of this pack.

Building a framework and emerging priorities

A Framework for Action

This framework for action puts inclusive sustainable growth, and equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart, promoting health in all policies building on our sector strengths in health tech as driving focus for the Economic Strategy.

The framework aligns with the vision and missions of the West Yorkshire Plan against the pillars of productivity where we need to act. Prioritisation must unpick the relationship between prosperity and inclusivity ensuring that all areas can benefit from the region's strengths.



Core Principles

Inclusive Economy: this means connecting all parts of our region to opportunity and understanding the wider drivers of productivity including issues such as childcare where we can look at sector needs to offer choice for families and support to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Sustainable Growth: this means stimulating investment opportunities for net-zero, boosting green skills, and attracting green jobs to the region, while supporting decarbonisation of transport, homes, and industry to meet our net-zero target.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion: ensuring we champion the diversity of West Yorkshire and utilise networks within communities to reach all parts the region where support is needed.

Health and wellbeing: recognising the role of health and wellbeing in our region's prosperity and promoting good health in employment, transport, and infrastructure development.

Draft Priorities

Business

Building on strengths where West Yorkshire has a comparative advantage in established and emerging clusters:

- Build on and work with business leaders to overcome barriers and unlock investment
- Working with cluster leadership bodies nationally and make links regionally including with universities
- Support opportunities to drive export growth
- Delivering skills pathways aligned to cluster opportunities
- Working with local authorities to ensure the quality and availability of business premises
- Build on the Investment Zones model to wider sectors / clusters of excellence across West Yorkshire linking to university expertise, national and regional bodies.
- Sector targeting for productivity growth must reflect our ambitions for an inclusive economy and consider synergies between sectors. We need to widen our understanding of productivity drivers to consider the impacts of issues such as childcare.

Draft Priorities

We want to ensure that the areas of West Yorkshire's economy can promote good work but particularly in those sectors where there are high numbers of employment such as retail and hospitality:

- Capturing learning from the first year of delivery of the Fair Work Charter and building on the successes
- Working with sectors to support uptake and embed good practice bringing together communities of good practice
- Building on best practice of what works in boosting low productivity, especially in sectors of the West Yorkshire economy currently characterised by large scale, low pay employment.
- Supporting businesses to implement sustainability changes.

We need to deepen our understanding of the finance landscape to include a focus on place-based impact investing and investment opportunities for under-represented groups.

- Provision of grants will not be sufficient to address the investment gap in West Yorkshire. Our role to foster the right conditions for investment and leverage funding should be strengthened. Investment Zones provide a strategic opportunity to do this.

Draft Areas for Action

We must simplify the business ecosystem recognising the role of the Combined Authority as a convenor of support and raising awareness of all types of provision:

- A clear, easy to access portal of information for businesses and professional services.
- We must consider informal networks and key individuals within these networks to broaden our reach and sign-posting activity.
- We must do more to celebrate and elevate the diversity of businesses in our region including in sectors not directly supported by Combined Authority programmes.
- Alternative business models should also be considered alongside an articulation of the role of the Combined Authority.
- The COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted upon the future of work, we must reflect these opportunities in our offer of business support reflecting the needs of different types of businesses and understanding more on the potential of the informal economy and informal support networks that exist.

Draft Areas for Action

- Skills are a big driver of inequality between places and have central role to play in an inclusive economy. There is a need to move beyond just upskilling and understand where it might be more appropriate to focus support on lower-level skills with the opportunity to open-up progression routes.
- Our review of the skills system and further devolution will support our ambition to fully integrate business and skills working with local employers to understand their current and future skills needs and make sure our schools, colleges, universities and training providers deliver the right courses to meet these.

Call for Evidence: Bibliography

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