

Autumn Budget 2024: Key takeaways for the West Midlands

This note summarises some of the key Autumn Budget announcements of relevance to the West Midlands. The full document is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

The economy and growth

- **Confirmation that the [Integrated Settlement](#)** for the West Midlands and Greater Manchester will commence next year, with further funding details to follow; and roll-out of settlements to West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, the North East and potentially Greater London in 2026.
- **Continuation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund** at £900m for the next financial year (down from £1.5bn from this financial year) “as a transitional arrangement”.
- **“Minded to” cancel the Levelling Up Culture and Capital Projects and the £15m of inward investment and culture funding announced for the West Midlands in March**, with local consultation before making the final decision.
- **Consultation on ending funding for pan-regional partnerships**, and “minded to” cease funding for Local Enterprise Partnership functions.
- **A new Public Sector Reform and Innovation Fund**, with £165m allocated to projects in 2025-26; and £100m over three years for innovative projects, working with mayors and local leaders.
- **An additional £1.3bn of grant funding for local government in 2025-26**, including at least £600m provided to social care. The Household Support Fund will be retained and uplifted. £1bn was also announced to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and £230m for tackling homelessness.
- **Extension of the Innovation Accelerator programme** in the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and Glasgow, through 2025-26.
- **Confirmation of future funding for innovation** with a total of £20.4bn for R&D, including: £13.9bn for R&D investment in 2025-26; at least £25m in 2025-26 to launch a new multi-year R&D Missions Programme; to maintain R&D tax relief; £6.1bn on core research; and £2.7bn for continued association to Horizon Europe. The government also committed to set out 10-year R&D budgets for key activities in phase 2 of the Spending Review.
- **Confirmation of future funding for sector development**, including £2bn for the automotive sector; £975m for the aerospace sector; and £520m for a new Life Sciences Innovative Manufacturing Fund, with £70m committed in 2025-26.
- **Extension to the Made Smarter programme**, with up to £37m extra funding in 2025-26.
- **Replacement of the current 75% discount to business rates for hospitality, retail and leisure** with a rateable value of under £110k with a discount of 40% from April 2025 alongside freezing the small business tax multiplier. More detail released [here](#).
- **Reducing the threshold** for employer payment of National Insurance contributions from £9,100 per year to £5,000 per year and raising the NICs rate from 13.8% to 15%.

Jobs, training and skills

- **16% increase in the minimum wage for 18-20 year olds**, a ‘first step’ toward a consolidated 18+ single adult wage. The Living Wage (applicable to those aged 21 and over) increases to £12.21 per hour. The Apprentice wage will also increase to £7.55 per hour.
- **As part of the Get Britain Working White Paper, £240m investment in sixteen “trailblazer projects”** to address economic inactivity or youth unemployment.

- **£115m for a ‘Connect to Work’ supported employment programme** matching people with disabilities or health conditions into vacancies and supporting them to succeed.
- **£300m for investment in further education**, with the £40m to transform the Apprenticeship Levy transforming into a Growth and Skills Levy, to help launch shorter and foundation apprenticeships in key sectors. This investment also commits to delivering the Lifelong Learning Entitlement with a revised launch date of January 2027.

Homes

- **An additional £500m for the Affordable Homes Programme in 2025-26.** The government will set out details of future investment beyond the current programme (ending in 2026) at Stage 2 of the Spending Review, working toward 1.5 million homes over this Parliament.
- **£3.4bn billion for the three-year Warm Homes Plan** to increase household energy efficiency, including £1.8bn to support fuel poverty schemes.
- **Reduced discounts on the Right to Buy scheme** and full retention of the ‘receipts’ by local authorities for re-investment in social housing stock.
- **5 year settlement on social rent formula at CPI+1%** giving registered providers and council landlords more certainty for investing in existing stock and new supply.
- **£50m to expedite the planning process**, including for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and help recruit 300 new planners (graduates and apprentices).
- Increase in investment in the **remediation of unsafe housing** to over £1bn in 2025-26.
- Increase from **3% to 5% the stamp duty land tax** on additional homes.

Transport

- **Re-commitment to the HS2 link between West Midlands and the heart of London**, with tunnelling to Euston confirmed.
- **Commitment in the Chancellor’s speech to release of existing funding for the Metro network extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.** The updated WBHE business case is currently awaiting final DfT sign off.
- **£1bn funding to support local areas and bus operators**, in 2025-26; and a commitment to develop a sustainable model of government support for the bus sector.
- **A new £3 bus fare cap for the 2025 calendar year.** The WMCA is working with operators to ensure fares are kept as low as possible.
- **An additional £200m for City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS)** for 2025-26; and a further £650m for local transport projects outside of CRSTS, which will include transport related projects in Levelling Up Funds 1,2 and 3.
- **£500m for road maintenance** for 2025-26.
- **£100m for additional investment to support local authorities in installing further cycling and walking infrastructure.**
- **£200m for local authorities to install additional on-street electric vehicle charge points.**

In an effort to bring you up to speed with the key announcements, there is a possibility we may have missed key announcements or potential details: this is a headline summary. Please refer to the statement documentation for full depth and clarity.