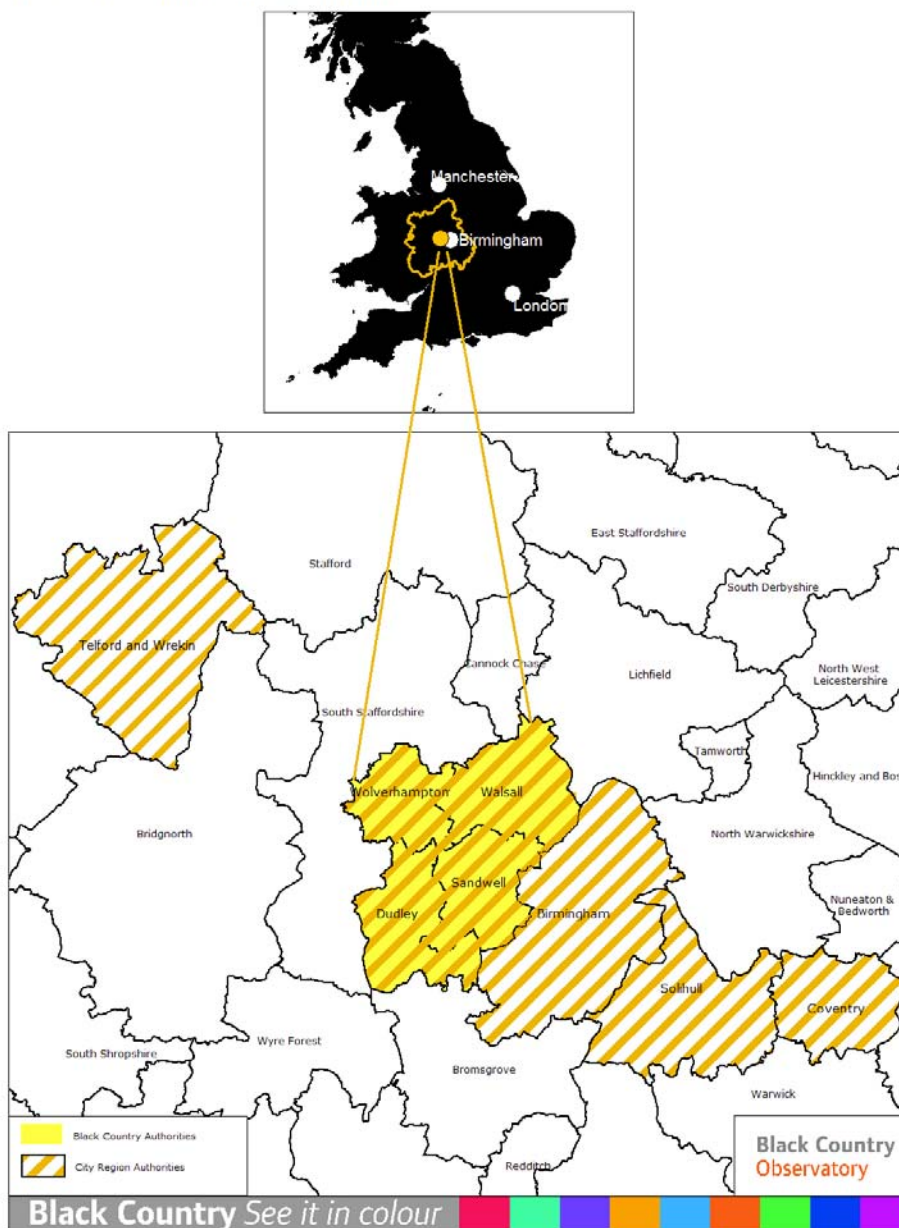


A5 BLACK COUNTRY IN THE CITY REGION

A5.1 The Black Country is a distinctive sub-region but at the same time is an integral part of a city region centred on Birmingham as an international city located at the heart of Britain. The Black Country Consortium and its partners are committed to accelerating growth and economic competitiveness of the sub-region as an integral part of Our City Region. The City Region includes the four Black Country Boroughs, Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry and Telford covering a total population of 2.75 million. (**Figure A5.1**).

Figure A5.1

The Black Country in the City Region



- A5.2 The Black Country represents 40% of the City Region's population. Accelerating economic growth in the Black Country will therefore make a major contribution to the economic performance of the City Region. In terms of GVA statistics if the Black Country is excluded, the rest of the Urban City Region makes a much more distinctive and extensive contribution to the regional and national economy. However, when the Black Country is included it exhibits a £0.8bn gap¹.
- A5.3 This is accounted for by the Black Country's £2.6bn output gap with the rest of the UK - that is the additional Gross Value Added (GVA) which would be generated by the sub-region if it was functioning economically on a par with the UK average. (**Appendix A2**). The urban renaissance of the Black Country, as set out in this document, is therefore a vital ingredient in the competitiveness of Britain's largest City Region outside London.
- A5.4 This Study represents over two years of detailed and thorough technical work and political engagement that enables the Black Country authorities to demonstrate clearly the scale and deliverability of growth and competitiveness within this sub-region of over 1m people over the next 20 to 30 years. **It provides therefore a robust plan for the Black Country's contribution to the delivery of growth and competitiveness of the City Region, including:**
- Building 44,000 new homes by 2021 (71,000 new homes to 2031) and a revitalised housing market, accommodating 125,000 more people (61,000 by 2021) and a culturally and economically diverse range of households.
 - Economic restructuring accommodating up to 160,000 new jobs by 2031 (94,000 net additional), jobs primarily in Centres and Employment Land Investment Corridors, including 66,000 more jobs for knowledge workers (degree or equivalent). [2021 figures = c 105,000 new jobs (52,000 net additional jobs)].
 - Accommodating up to 1.45m sq m more office floor space and a target of 380,000 sq m more comparison goods shopping, by 2031.
 - 63,000 people in employment who are currently not working (80% activity rate).
 - An integrated Black Country-wide education and skills system delivering 100,000 more people with qualifications.
 - A transformed environmental image of the Black Country as 'Urban Park'.
 - An integrated transport system providing genuine connectivity to all Black Country Centres as well as to Birmingham.

¹ See Appendix A1 'CityRegion Output Gap'.

- A5.5 It also provides the anchor for the delivery of growth and competitiveness in the western sub-sector of the City Region. The Study has established cross boundary working relationships with its Environs Group and specific joint studies, notably the Black Country and Telford Housing Market Study which is part of Regional Housing Strategy work. In this context the "Environs Group" is the ongoing dialogue between the Consortium and local authorities which lie adjacent to, or in the case of Telford and Wrekin, have strong economic and social ties.