

**SANDWELL LOCAL PLAN 2024-41 EXAMINATION
SCHEDULE OF ACTION POINTS FOR THE COUNCIL**

Day 2 - Matter 2

2.14	Provide a brief / concise note from Regeneration Officers on the demand for vacant land for clean / tech industry.
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1. Overview of future growth industries in Sandwell and how this aligns to Economic Growth opportunities within the Local Plan Vision

The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy reflects the regional strengths, with the West Midlands one of only two places in the country recognised as having nationally notable strengths across all the priority sectors named in the Modern Industrial Strategy.

The emerging West Midlands Growth Plan closely aligns to the Modern Industrial Strategy and presents a substantial opportunity over the next three years and beyond to work with government on shared priorities that meet the growth ambitions of the region and the country. Five specific clusters that will accelerate growth, have been identified but the emerging West Midlands Growth Plan, in five focused cluster areas:

Cluster A. Advanced engineering, light electric vehicles and batteries.

Cluster B. Clean Tech and Smart Energy Systems

Cluster C. Health & medical devices, diagnostics and associated digital healthcare

Cluster D. Digital, tech & creative.

Cluster E. Next generation services

2. The Draft Sandwell Place Based Strategy aligns to the West Midlands Growth Plan, Modern Industrial Strategy and outlines:

The success of the Modern Industrial Strategy's growth driving sectors can be achieved by a targeted approach to place-based economic policy, with Sandwell poised to contribute to regional and national growth by increasing productivity, efficiency, output, job growth and a targeted approach to skills development with WMCA, education anchors and the Local Authority. Using the Industrial Strategy as a lever to engage deeper with a cluster-based approach aligned to these high growth sectors and our growing sub sector base.

The following outlines our key sector specialisms, key businesses and our message of strength and begins to articulate the opportunity, that if prioritised, these will support economic, energy and defence resilience, adaptability of supply chains to global challenges, and contribution to long-term strategic growth and national renewal.

- Within Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics – our subsectors such as automotive, robotics, advanced materials, chemistry, metals & metal products, give us a strong presence within global supply chains and strategically important connections underpinning both the defence and energy security of the Nation with SMEs supplying into MoD, Rolls Royce, BAE Systems and

Bombardier. We have a strong talent pool of over 11,000 materials cluster employees with specialisms in advanced plastics, packaging, glass making and metalworking.

- Our Business Professional and Financial Services Sector is worth over £930m per year with over 2000 accounting professionals in Sandwell. A fact very much overlooked in terms of the recruitment opportunities for professionals aligned to our Manufacturing base – an area of skills development to retain, attract and grow the next generation.
- There is a high growth opportunity within Life Sciences with significant synergies with machinery, equipment and manufacturing expertise to develop the medical technologies for surgical, dental and prosthetics. Aligning this sector with the new Midland Metropolitan Super Hospital and Learning Campus and with Birmingham Life Sciences Hub will drive innovation, job growth and productivity gains into the heart of the well-being of our population, alongside the 9000 healthcare and 8,500 social care professionals currently working in Sandwell.
- Food and Drink, automated food production and personalised food is also a sector which has grown over many years in Sandwell with a large local talent pool of over 4,500 food production and food tech employees, with significant strengths in the wider machinery and equipment manufacturing sector

For Sandwell to ensure it positions itself within the regional growth context of the Industrial Strategy, our approach will be to align to growth sectors and support the emerging transition towards a more future, foresight orientated approach to growing our cluster opportunities, across the wider Borough, within our Opportunity Zones and to develop / commission critical skills pathways with our education base, University networks and with the needs and requirements of our Industrial sector leaders.

This will allow us over the 20-year period of this PBS to focus on creating the conditions for long-term economic growth with a focus on:

1. Green, renewable and clean tech to support the transition to a Low Carbon Economy and National Energy security.
2. Adv. Manufacturing, Logistics, and industrial automation with a cluster-based approach to the integration of robotics, widespread 3D additive manufacturing, AI and Industry 4.0, using Sandwell STEM Centre as focal point for our broad manufacturing base, innovation, skills development and product development, supporting the overall growth of regional and national supply chains.
3. Circular Economy & Sustainable Materials with a focus on our Materials sub sectors, linked to global industries seeking to minimise environmental impact through reducing waste and specialisms in development of sustainable materials and growth potential in production of biodegradable materials, eco-friendly packaging, sustainable supply chain solutions and sustainable chemistry.

4. Healthcare / tech / medical device innovation within the Life Sciences sector, linked to MMUH and Learning Campus and Birmingham Life Sciences / Innovation Zone.

5. Industrialised Space Sector & Defence supply chains, providing a narrative for innovation to develop with pivoting into longer term global, economic growth sectors with a focus on 3D Printing tech and clean room testing facilities for higher value products and processes.

6. Food and Drink, as a resilient growth opportunity with core suppliers, skills and technology located in the Borough.

3. Black Country Industrial Cluster

The Black Country Industrial Cluster covers an inland area of the West Midlands across Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton. Our diverse and flexible industrial ecosystem makes our Industrial Cluster distinctive amongst all other UK clusters, and includes adaptable and competitive small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) comprising:

- more than 3,000 manufacturing companies - employing more than 50,000 people
- the centre of the UK metals and construction products sectors
- 80 leading firms in the metals and construction sectors that contribute more than £2bn to the regional economy and employ more than 12,000 skilled people
- national centres of excellence in brownfield remediation and the circular economy.

Sandwell Council has a close relationship with the Black Country Industrial Cluster which in turn works with the universities of Birmingham and Warwick to help lower the energy use of more than 3000 Energy Intensive manufacturing businesses with a large number of clients in Sandwell, they understand both the challenges and opportunities decarbonisation presents, and work alongside businesses and various local and national government departments, to support and advocate for the development of an innovative and world-leading net zero industrial cluster by 2040.

They are building on the ongoing success from running their recent 'Repowering the Black Country' 3-year project which was an industrial cluster decarbonisation project partly funded by the department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy and UK Research and Innovation aimed at supporting Black Country businesses to take advantage of global clean growth opportunities and to make the transition to a Net-Zero industrial future.

Currently there is an effective decarbonisation support grant project running to support for businesses in Sandwell supported by the Council's Business Growth Team, built on the legacy of 'Repowering the Black Country' which helps fund on site business energy assessments and additionally now delivers grants to businesses across the West Midlands.

Numerous Sandwell-based companies are actively engaged in reduced carbon emission manufacturing and within the circular economy, where they are focusing on reducing waste, reusing materials, and promoting sustainability. These include businesses involved in advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, and waste management. Sandwell Council also has initiatives to support businesses in adopting circular economy practices and achieving net-zero carbon emissions.

4. Real-time Examples:

DPD - Is a large distribution and logistics company with its HQ based in Oldbury had a £1.5bn turnover in 2023. It has begun to electrify large proportions of its delivery fleet. By 2030 they aim to have 85% of their transport solutions as emission free, and 100% by 2035. They are estimated to have over 10,000 vehicles in the UK alone.

Dalair - Is an expert manufacturer of air handling units such as heaters, air coolers, and air humidifiers which is based in Wednesbury, they are committed to developing energy-efficient solutions that minimise environmental impact, ensuring a greener future for generations to come.

Voestalpine Metsec – Are based in Oldbury have developed an innovative method to help decarbonise the manufacture of steel products. They produce low embodied carbon steel, which is a material that has been manufactured using modern, greener technologies, or steel that has been sourced from recycling plants.

Briggs Amasco - Is the UK's leading national commercial roofing company with its HQ based in Cradley Heath, they are refining their emissions inventory by shifting away from spend based emissions factors. They closely collaborate with their core suppliers to request reports against the environmental product declarations to provide their clients with an accurate view of our company carbon footprint. They installed 100 photovoltaic panels onto the roof of their Head Office in 2024 and are installing EV charging points at their sites.

Enfinium - Is in the later stages of developing 'Kelvin' which is an energy from waste facility in West Bromwich near to later stages of its construction. When operational, it will divert 395,000 tonnes of residual waste from landfill or export overseas. Instead, it will use residual waste to generate 44MW (gross) of energy per annum, equivalent to the needs of more than 95,000 UK homes.

Sandwell is a hub for a more sustainable type of advanced manufacturing, with companies involved in various stages of the circular economy, from material sourcing to product design and recycling.

Doocey Group – Are based in Tipton and is a civil engineering company which had a turnover of £62.4million in 2024 and they grew their turnover rapidly by 33.5% last year. They recycle plastic bottle to make plastic pellets which are then sent to Polydrain civils itself located in West Bromwich which makes the recycled plastic pellets into pipes and water grid and drainage systems, which are later then installed back in the ground by Doocey as they carry out civil site utility maintenance projects.

Another circular economy project in Sandwell is also part delivered by Doocey Group, they recycle plastic bottles and the reconstituted plastic pellets are then sent to Stephen's plastic mouldings Ltd in Oldbury who deliver plastic injection moulding which is a type of manufacturing process that is used to create consistent batches of the same product both fast and efficiently, it is one of the most reliable manufacturing techniques for the production of plastic products and by using recycled products. Stephen's plastic mouldings are reducing carbon emissions and the need for sourcing virgin materials.