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Welcome - We're here for you

As our journey continues, we are looking ahead to a new decade for West Midlands Employers working at the heart of public sector organisations. We reached out to our Shareholder Councils, trusted partners and stakeholders to help shape this Strategic Plan and they were clear that WME is an invaluable partner and has a strong role to play in helping them meet future challenges.

Since 2019, WME has been on a journey of growth re-establishing the organisation as a credible partner and delivery provider for public sector organisations in the region and nationally. That platform gives us a strong foundation from which to consolidate and strengthen the organisation, and our partnerships, over the next decade.

We want to be indispensable to organisations and will be shifting our attention towards showing you that we know you, we understand you, that we can inspire you and can deliver for you. You will see a greater focus on how we use our voice on your behalf on issues that impact you, increased engagement with politicians, along with refreshed shareholder benefits.

There are many immediate challenges the public sector faces, along with opportunities presented by increased devolution and local government re-organisation. We will support organisations on these but our Strategic Plan also looks beyond these and contributes to the long term sustainability and transformation of the public sector.

We hope that when you read this Strategic Plan you will be enthusiastic about what the future holds for West Midlands Employers as the regional employers' organisation and will feel confident about how **we will be your partner in progress by delivering trusted services, leading collaboration, representing the Region, improving career desirability and inspiring innovation** in public sector organisations.



Rebecca Davis
Chief Executive, WME

A new era for WME

As the Chair of the WME Elected Member Board, I am pleased to report that the growth of WME over the last 5 years has been clearly planned and managed. This has led to significant changes to the governance of the organisation to ensure it is well placed to continue to meet the needs of Shareholder Councils and the many other public sector organisations that access advice, support and services from WME.

As WME enters a new era, you will see the organisation consolidate its position as a strong regional body that can deliver services across the whole employee lifecycle, support transformation and provide specialist advice and consultancy. This is alongside being a trusted voice nationally and in the West Midlands on matters that impact us all.

As custodian of the Board, I am keen to ensure WME continues to be a positive asset for councils, that is governed well and provides excellent value for money. We know we need to deepen our partnerships with organisations and ensure what we do is bespoke, ensuring we have the right conversations, with the right people, to provide you with the right services at the right time.

You also reaffirmed that we are a trusted partner and ally who you rely on, and you want us to do more collaboration and 'big ticket' initiatives – this is inspiring our ambitions.

WME is prepared for the future as a sustainable organisation and we will be focused on our ambition **to be your partner in progress.**



Cllr Gwilym Butler
WME Chair, WME

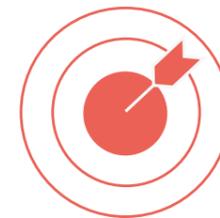


Getting to know WME



Our Vision

That every citizen of the West Midlands has access to modern, high quality public services that work together to help them and our region thrive.



Our Purpose

As the Regional Employers' Organisation, we will support our shareholder councils and other public sector organisations on their current or immediate people needs and help to prepare their organisation and employees for the future world of work.



Our Mission

Uniting Local Government Employers and other public sector organisations to ensure they attract, develop, and retain a highly skilled, motivated, and productive workforce, with a sustainable talent pipeline that delivers high quality services for the communities we serve.



Our Priorities

To be your partner in progress by delivering trusted services, leading collaboration, representing the Region, improving career desirability and inspiring innovation.

Our Journey

The West Midlands has had a Regional Employers' Organisation (REO) for over 50 years. From the early days of West Midlands LGA through to West Midlands Councils, the organisation has evolved and responded to changing sector needs.

In 2013, West Midlands Employers emerged as a re-focussed REO. The past decade has already seen many changes and we have worked collaboratively to address many sectoral challenges, including a pandemic.

Society, our communities, and by necessity the public sector, have evolved significantly in that time, and at WME we anticipate an even faster pace of change for our sector in the next decade as we continue to transform how we work and deliver our services.



Maintaining an inflation based shareholder subscription
(currently equal to around 11% of operating costs)

Owned by **31 West Midlands' Shareholder Councils**

A steadily growing not-for-profit organisation
- our turnover has gone from £1.9m in 2020 to £4m in 2024
- allowing us to reinvest more back into initiatives that support the public sector workforce

Today WME is...

One of 9 employers' organisations nationally, each region has one and we are registered with the Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employer Associations

Sector led and owned, but with autonomy to act as a trusted 'independent' partner with an ethical and professional viewpoint

Providing services to **over 450 public sector organisations**



Where it all began

West Midlands establishes a voluntary Regional Employers' Organisation and Provincial Council formed under the Trade Union & Labour Relations Act 1974.

- 1999** West Midlands Local Government Association is established bringing together the functions of the REO and Regional Policy Forum.
- 2000** WMLGA established a Regional Partnership Centre and was responsible for the WM Regional Assembly (2002 to 2010) and for the West Midlands in Europe office in Brussels (until 2013) and was home to the West Midlands Centre of Excellence.
- 2009** The organisation is renamed as the **West Midlands Leaders Board**.
- 2010** Became **West Midlands Councils** (still encompassing the REO and regional policy functions) until 2013.

- 2013** A significant change in regional responsibilities led to the cessation of WMC and the **establishment of West Midlands Employers (WME)** as the West Midlands' REO.
- 2020** **WME launched its first strategic plan** for 2020 to 2025 to build a strong membership organisation, with a broad service support offer, aiming to grow the organisation in reach and reputation.
- 2020-2022** **WME provides proactive and free support** to Councils through the Covid pandemic - being there for councils when they needed us most.
- 2023** Post pandemic **WME relocates to a new HQ** in the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham - establishing a regional collaboration space.
- 2024** **WME prepares a new plan for 2025-2030** and implements a business refresh with new governance that establishes an (Elected Member) Shareholder Board of 31 council representatives.

“The ability to access WME resource to assist in objectively and independently addressing live employee relations issues is highly valued.”

- Chief Executive

A growing organisation

With the support and leadership of our Shareholder Councils and strategic partners, WME has come a long way in the last decade. We have seen steady growth in demand for our services and support, we are building strong relationships within our sector and beyond, locally, regionally and nationally. We are excited for what the next decade will bring, both in terms of challenges and opportunities.

Our values are what makes us

All our work is underpinned by our values.

At WME we love what we do.

Joining the dots and connecting organisations in the interests of citizens is important to us.

We are proud of our values, we live them, hold ourselves accountable against them, and talk about them regularly as a team and with stakeholders.

Our values will be a central part of 'how' we deliver our ambitions over the next decade.



Our Values

-  We **influence** change and innovate to build a better public sector
-  We are **honest** and do the right thing
-  We strive for **excellence** every single day
-  We are **ambitious** and want to do spectacular things to make a difference
-  We **respect** individuals and support our public sector family
-  We are **trusted** colleagues and you can depend on us

Where we work

WME works across the West Midlands, you will see us:

Working locally

In Councils and with you on-site to support you as part of your membership benefits or paid-for services.

Working regionally

We facilitate and lead networks within the region alongside hosting events and managing region-wide shared services.

Working nationally

We benefit from having a voice nationally and engage with key organisations and stakeholders to represent the West Midlands. We will secure grants where available and we provide some of our services to councils beyond our region, through our REO network.



Our new HQ in the Jewellery Quarter is a Regional Collaboration Centre for the West Midlands and our facilities are available for use by public sector organisations.

Sector led but fiercely independent

We are sector owned but we operate with independence and strict confidentiality, as a trusted partner. We sometimes have to deliver difficult messages and provide complex advice on confidential and sensitive matters, but we do so with honesty and integrity.

We have seen an increase in demand for this type of support and we will strengthen our capacity and expertise in this area.



The WME team

WME is led by a Chief Executive and Leadership Team, with a small core team of highly skilled officers, supported by our Talent Bank of over 70 expert associate consultants – ensuring we can meet all your needs whilst carefully managing our overheads.

WME is led by an Elected Member Board, with representatives from each Shareholder Council.

A snapshot of our growth



With the continued support and leadership of our Councils, WME has come a long way and we are delivering more and more services across the public sector.

The shareholder membership contribution represents around 11% of our operating cost but offers an important REO foundation, from which WME has been able to build a sustainable and affordable service for Councils. In order to achieve this, we have invested in growing our traded services and diversifying our portfolio and will focus on consolidating that portfolio over the life of this plan.

We have doubled our income over the last 5 years, strengthening our reserves and ensuring that as a not-for-profit organisation we can invest in new services for the public sector. The contributions to our Workforce Priority Fund means we will continue to invest in new and emerging workforce priorities helping WME to continue providing HR, organisational development, and leadership services that aim to improve the resilience and effectiveness of local government and related organisations.

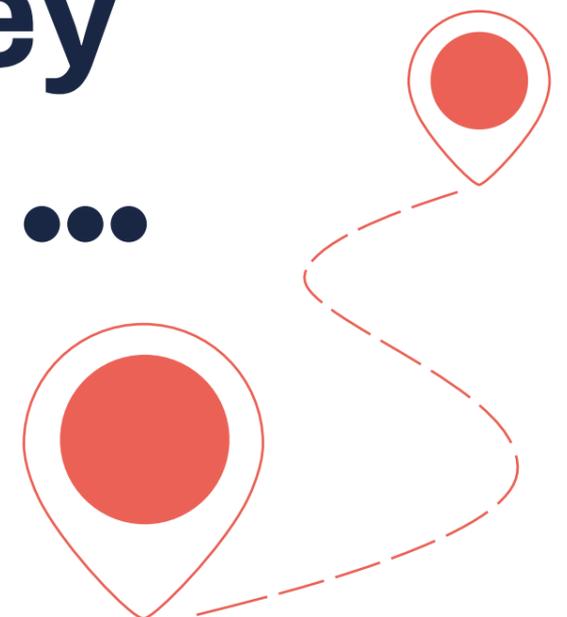
Our medium term Financial Strategy outlines how we fund our activities and invest in our region.

WME Financial Performance 2019-2024



Our journey continues...

This plan will take WME into the next decade, with new priorities and service ambitions, enhanced shareholder benefits and with an ambition to return to being an independent employer, fully autonomous in its business operations.





An award winning combination

Over the past 5 years WME has transformed itself from a small consultancy-led organisation to a sector-led improvement partner. We have delivered collaborative initiatives that have gained national recognition, helping to showcase our work with our shareholder councils.

Some of our highlights

**The Sunday Times Best Places to Work
Top 100 Employer**

**In-House Recruitment Supplier
Bronze Winner for Outstanding Impact (Individual)**

**REC – Recruitment Team of the Year 2023
(Highly Commended)**

**In-House Recruitment Supplier
Finalists for the Specialist Job Board**

**PPMA
Highly Commended for Excellence
in People Management**

**ONREC
The Creative Online Marketing Award**

Over the next decade, we want to consolidate our position as a sector leading innovation partner to draw in investment and opportunities to do even more for communities in the West Midlands.

To read more about our achievements over the past five years, please take a look at our Annual Report.



Evolving our organisation

Over the next 5 years WME will continue to be a small and agile organisation with a dense matrix of expertly skilled employees and associate consultants that operate with high standards and integrity.

To deliver the consolidation and evolution of the organisation, WME will invest in our business systems to ensure effective and efficient service delivery, ensuring this underpins our plans for a relationship-led organisation.

2025-2026

- WME aims to become an independent employer enabling it to operate effectively to deliver this plan attracting and retaining the best talent
- Introduction of annual review meetings with Council Leadership Teams
- Launch of an enhanced membership offer
- Implementation of a refreshed communication strategy
- Investment in shaping an AI enabled team

2026-2027

- Deliver improvements to our CRM system to support improved customer engagement and reporting of management information to enable relationship led 'rich' conversations
- Internal audit processes to check operational compliance and manage risk
- Review and refresh of helpdesk systems and processes
- Review of operational services and processes to support effective business performance

2027-2028

- Mid-plan progress check to ensure priorities and ambitions are evolving and adapting to changing sectoral needs

Priorities for the next five years 2025-2030

We will be your partner in progress by delivering against five priorities;



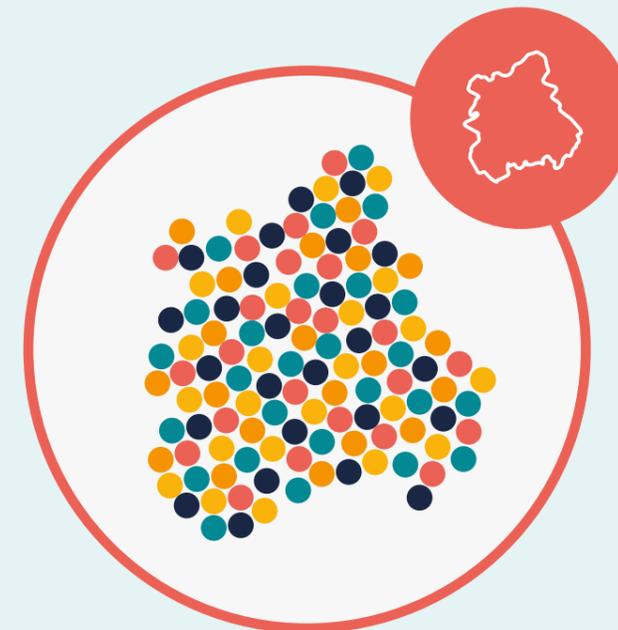
1. Delivering Trusted Services



2. Leading Collaboration



5. Inspiring Workforce Innovation



3. Representing the Region



4. Improving Career Desirability



1. Delivering Trusted Services

We will:



Deliver high quality, award-winning services across the full employee lifecycle.



Commission existing and new shared services and secure their long-term future where an ongoing business case supports this approach, acting as the contracting body for our Councils.



Engage with all Shareholder Councils and Corporate Subscribers through an annual planning and review meeting (with their key stakeholders) to look back at the value they have received from their membership and to plan ahead as to how WME can best support their organisation in the coming 12 months.



Grow the capacity and expertise within the regional Talent Bank to ensure high quality access to the right skills when you need it.



Strengthen the capacity, quality and independence of our confidential and sensitive advice, through a collaboration with a legal firm who can provide you with employment solicitors and further support as needed.



2. Leading Collaboration

We will use our unique position to:



Make connections around policy, services and future opportunities and connect organisations at a Regional and National level, in the interests of citizens.



Strengthen engagement with Central Government to bring in opportunities to the Region and be recognised as an enabler of collaboration and change.



Support Devolution through work with Councils and key stakeholders in geographic areas, to deliver on their devolution ambitions across the Region.



Collaborate with experts and leading organisations to shape policy, respond to consultations, and further new thinking on issues that matter to you.





3. Representing the Region

We will:



Promote and showcase the work of West Midlands' Councils within the public sector, at relevant national conferences.



Fulfil the role of the Regional Employers Organisation including the Joint Regional (Provincial) Council function to foster stronger industrial relations with Unions and Elected members to provide a forum for dispute resolution.



Understand the Region in detail, having up to date, reliable and quality data on key workforce and community metrics.



Raise the profile of organisations in the West Midlands as future focused employers.



Improve our communications to ensure we are promoting the work that we do effectively across the Region and Nationally.



Respond to Government consultations on issues that impact Local Government to ensure our voice is heard in policy and decision making.



Strengthen our engagement with Elected Members in the Region, through our governance arrangements and providing more dedicated support to building key relationships with leaders and portfolio holders.



4. Improving Career Desirability

We will:



Boost public sector jobs branding, highlighting local government careers as stable, impactful and community-driven.



Support career growth by facilitating available pathways to training, development and leadership programmes.



Advance Diversity & Inclusion by showcasing how public sector careers reflect the communities they serve on key workforce and community metrics.



Promote social mobility through career progression and embed best practice across the sector.



Broaden our reach by using digital tools to attract new generations of tech-savvy talent.





5. Inspiring Workforce Innovation

We will:



Invest the annual workforce priority fund on long-term initiatives that are focused on addressing the problems that no single organisation can address.



Co-create solutions to current and future workforce challenges that are new to our sector.



Be future focused and bring in expertise from outside the sector to share experience and drive new ideas and thinking on shared challenges.



Lead by example and ensure WME is seen as a pioneer of innovative ways of working and technology.



Be a Centre of Excellence for organisational and workforce improvement, powered by new technology and data driven insights.



“Having the WME capacity to call upon is brilliant - a lifeline actually.”

- Chief Executive

“My role can feel lonely. WME are a trusted, critical friend, there when needed”

- Head of HR

“The independent and professional support WME have given us over the years with difficult investigations has been excellent”

- Head of HR

“The immediacy of advice, the good practice and responsive practical support make WME a trusted partner”

- Head of HR

Driving Social Value

As a not for profit organisation and proudly owned by 31 Councils in the Region, all of the work we do provides social value. We recognise that we need to do more to identify opportunities to promote social value as a benefit for organisations and to ensure we're maximising the impact we can have on communities.



Our commitment on social value over the next decade;

By March 2026 we will have developed and launched a Social Value action plan for WME, that will be reviewed annually.

By March 2026 we will manage and report our social value contribution to the Region and commit to delivering a year-on-year increase in this.

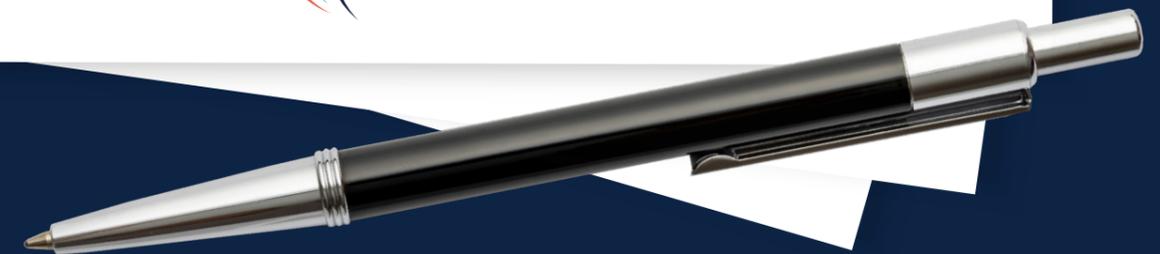
We will work towards becoming a carbon neutral organisation.

We will ensure we think, buy and support the local economy, where our procurement and purchasing allows.

We will embed social value requirements within all our contracts, we will ensure there are specific social value benefits identified for the Region.

We are committed to ensuring all our catering and hospitality is from small businesses and local suppliers, who themselves demonstrate social value and support local communities through their supply chain.

As an organisation we value investment in local people through employment and volunteering opportunities, apprenticeship and training programmes and work skills development opportunities.



WME's Strategy Plan on a Page

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Our Five Priorities



1. **Delivering Trusted Services**



2. **Leading Collaboration**



3. **Representing the Region**



4. **Improving Career Desirability**



5. **Inspiring Workforce Innovation**



Further information

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