

East Midlands County Combined Authority – Inclusive Growth Commission

Executive Summary

The Inclusive Growth Commission (IGC) is an initiative delivered in partnership between the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and the Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA).

The newly established EMCCA wishes to launch this area-wide initiative to take a systems level approach to developing recommendations for a set of long-term, strategic goals across economic, social and natural systems – and recommendations for short- and longer-term steps partners in the area could take to deliver against them.

In turn, the Commission's recommendations will inform an Inclusive Growth Strategy for the East Midlands that offers a long-term plan for people who live, work and study there the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

To achieve this, the IGC will consist of four phases:

- **Phase One (set-up and launch)** will develop a Terms of Reference and project scope for the Commission, which includes key aims, potential activities, and the division of responsibilities across key stakeholders. It will also entail pre-launch engagement, securing commissioners and the Commission launch itself. This phase will take place from August to October 2024.
- **Phase Two (building the evidence base and interim findings)** will compile detailed evidence around assets, challenges and opportunities for the region, alongside insights from key local leaders, experts and communities to supplement this desk-based work. The evidence will be used to shape a set of early recommendations that will form the basis of an interim report. The work should inform EMCCA submissions to the Spring 2025 spending review. This phase will take place from October to March 2024.
- **Phase Three (defining success and how it can be delivered)** will build on Phase 2 to establish a compelling long-term vision for the region, underpinned by a proposed set of evidence-based and measurable goals and delivery propositions for the region and its partners to take forward. These will be developed in partnership with key stakeholders, investors and residents. This phase is timed to factor in the outcomes from multi-year funding picture set out in the Spring 2025 spending review. It will take place from March to July 2025.
- **Phase four (final report and post-report handover)** will consist of writing up the final report and handing over assets for external use with key stakeholders and partners. This phase will take place in between July and September 2025.

The IGC will be chaired by Andy Haldane and will operate arms-length from EMCCA and its regional partners, although it will draw on these partners to provide constructive input and impartial advice.

The IGC commissioners will be appointed by the Mayor upon recommendations from the joint EMCCA/RSA team. There will be no more than 8 Commissioners (excluding the Chair) with a range of expertise in relevant sectors/issues, place-based strategy and/or in the East Midlands region.

The IGC will be supported by a Joint Secretariat led by the RSA with EMCCA embedded to build capacity and ensure continuity after the Commission reports. The Secretariat will support the Commission in managing commissioners, handling administrative functions, and delivery. The Secretariat will also function as the key connective tissue between the Commission and EMCCA and its partners.

A full responsibility assignment matrix will be developed covering all key stakeholders across the IGC, including the EMCCA Mayor.

Terms of Reference

EMCCA intends to develop an Inclusive Growth Strategy as a key input into a single ambitious, long term and evidence-based plan for the region which shifts the dial on entrenched inequalities. This work will run concurrently with the development of a Local Growth Plan, Skills Strategy and Transport Strategy.

Broadly, the work will aim to:

- Assemble, review and create evidence relating to the key economic, social and natural opportunities for the region;
- work with regional partners to analyse the evidence and surface examples of lived experience to understand the root causes behind the challenges faced;
- produce recommendations back to EMCCA on the region's assets and opportunities and how EMCCA and partners can best harness these to tackle inequalities and secure a more prosperous future for the region.

As a result, EMCCA is setting up an IGC. The IGC's work will inform the development of EMCCA's 'Inclusive Growth Strategy 2025-2035' expected to be prepared and published after the Commission has completed its work.

The new national and regional strategies will be mission driven. EMCCA has ten key objectives, outlined in its initial Strategy and Investment Framework (March 2024) on which it is seeking the IGC's advice:

- Growing our **economy** faster;
- Better matching the supply of people from the **skills** system to the needs of employers;
- Creating more, better paid **job opportunities**;
- Increasing the pace of our economy's journey to **Net Zero**;
- Building the new **homes** our residents need in the right places and to the right standards;
- Improving physical and digital **connectivity** for all parts of our region;
- Reducing the **inequalities** within our region that distort too many people's social mobility;
- Having a **healthier**, more work-ready population;
- Ensuring more residents and visitors can experience a vibrant **natural environment**;
- Enabling more **important decisions to be made locally**.

Alongside these objectives sit three bold policy interventions: low carbon, connected places and innovation. These system interventions are set to deliver enduring economic, social and environmental transformation of the region.

EMCCA is looking to invite fresh insights into the region's opportunities and challenges through the Commission's work in order to shift perspectives and identify new opportunities to supercharge a thriving East Midlands.

External views from the IGC will be critical, but the Commission process will also be rooted in local experiences through the direct input of commissioners based in the region, regular interface with local place leaders, and direct engagement with communities.

Taking into account EMCCA's Strategy and Investment Framework, the IGC has been set four 'exam questions' by the Mayor and agreed with the IGC Chair:

- What does inclusive growth mean for the region? What will communities feel is different in ten years' time from a successful inclusive growth strategy?
- What are the region's unique combination of strengths? How can it best leverage its economic assets across cities, towns and rural areas to growth these?
- What are the root causes that sit behind the region's well-established challenges in achieving inclusive growth? How can the region tackle these challenges to enable its full potential to be unleashed?
- What role can EMCCA play to effect change, alone and with its partners, including as part of the systems of public services?

Consideration of the above will be undertaken by the Commission and will produce the following key outputs:

- An interim report in March 2025 detailing the current picture of regional strengths, challenges and opportunities, with this evidence supporting a set of immediate foundational recommendations designed to feed into EMCCA's Spring 2025 Spending Review submissions.
- A final report in September 2025 setting out recommendations for regional inclusive growth goals across economic, social and natural systems alongside propositions at scale that would help achieve them.

Underpinning the delivery of these outputs will be four crucial components:

- A Commission of no more than 8 experts (with an appointed Chair also) in relevant sectors/issues, place-based strategy and/or the East Midlands region, who will meet regularly throughout the year-long period (details of meetings set out in the below phases).
- A team of policy, research and delivery experts drawn from the RSA who will conduct analysis and engagement activities.
- A set of expert advisory groups that will be convened to input into a small suite of specific challenges.

- A Place Coalition, consisting of a broad variety of leaders (those with the requisite authority to make commitments in the room) within the region drawn from the public, private and civil society sectors, who can work with EMCCA during and following the Commission to help develop and deliver the recommendations.

In light of its rich tradition of place-based commissions, the RSA is well positioned to support EMCCA's ambitions.