



Akhmed Yakoob

(Independent candidate)

The West Midlands region, with its diverse communities and vibrant cities, faces several pressing issues that demand immediate attention and strategic solutions. As the Metropolitan Mayor, it is imperative to identify and prioritize these challenges to foster sustainable growth and prosperity for all residents.

Key Priorities:

1. Economic Revitalization:

- West Midlands is currently seeing economic challenges. There are record levels of child poverty and a spike in use of food banks as well as job insecurity *ONS Stats*.
- My aim is to Implement policies to attract investment and stimulate job creation, particularly in sectors such as technology, green energy, and advanced manufacturing. I am uniquely positioned to use my links with the business sector in the UK, the middle-east, the Far east and the Mayor's existing budget to bring that to fruition.
- Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through access to funding, mentorship programs, and streamlined regulations to foster entrepreneurship and innovation.

2. Transportation Infrastructure:

- Addressing the region's transportation bottlenecks by investing in the expansion and modernization of public transportation networks, including buses, trains, and tram services, through public ownership and extension of bus franchising rules, this will reduce fares and induce uptake of public transport negating the use of cars. I would also work towards Abolishing the Low Traffic neighbourhoods that adds to congestion, allow private hire taxis to use bus lanes and abolish CAZ charges that target low-income households.
- Prioritizing sustainable transportation initiatives, such as cycling lanes and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

3. Affordable housing:

- Developing a comprehensive strategy to increase the availability of affordable housing, including both rental and homeownership options, to address the growing housing crisis in the region.
- Collaborating with local authorities and developers to incentivize the construction of affordable housing units including a larger proportion of social housing units, while preserving the integrity of existing communities. Use of Public development loans to lower cost of house building to make homes more affordable for end users.

4. Education and Skills Development:

- Investing in education and skills training programs to equip residents with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in the modern economy
- Partnering with schools, colleges, and businesses to create apprenticeship opportunities and vocational training programs tailored to the needs of key industries in the region.

5. Healthcare Access:

- Improving access to quality healthcare services by investing in healthcare infrastructure, including hospitals, clinics, and mental health facilities
- Promoting preventive healthcare measures and community-based wellness programs to address disparities in healthcare outcomes and promote overall well-being.

I will achieve this by bringing communities and stakeholders to sit on the regional Integrated health board and identify gaps and allocate resources to bring down health inequalities.

Innovative Solutions:

Smart City Initiatives:

- Leveraging technology and data-driven solutions to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and availability within urban areas, including smart transportation systems, energy management, and digital governance.
- Green Infrastructure Development:
Investing in renewable energy projects, green spaces, and sustainable development practices to mitigate the impact of climate change and promote environmental sustainability.
- Community Engagement and Inclusion:
Fostering partnerships with community organizations, advocacy groups, and marginalized communities to ensure that policies and initiatives are inclusive and address the needs of all residents.

A Lawyer with Vision for the West Midlands

I am a distinguished lawyer known for my unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and community empowerment. With a track record of advocating for the rights of marginalized individuals through various platforms- (social media) and spearheading initiatives aimed at societal reform.

My politics and vision are spurned by injustices I see here and abroad. I have seen first-hand the rising number of clients referred for stealing food because they cannot afford the weekly shop or because they cannot meet their monthly energy bills. The rise in use of food banks and wealth inequality, whilst our political elite tinker with the economy; still espousing the failed neo liberal trickle-down economics as the orthodoxy, is an indictment on them. The Political Elite currently serve corporate interests rather than the voting public. The increase in share stock of multinational companies whilst living standards fall for most people highlights this. What is particularly insidious and morally reprehensible is the increase in value of defence contractors' stock; whose wares are being used to cause genocide of the Palestinian people. Both Labour and Tories have failed to call for an arms embargo but still tacitly support the offending party, by continuing to provide Israel with military aid. The hypocrisy of the two main political parties when it comes to Human rights is clear to see, the constant beating of the War against Russia indicates no lessons were learned from the Illegal war on Iraq. It seems we can fund proxies for *war*, but we can't feed the *poor*.

I became a lawyer to fight against injustice. I come from a deprived part of North Birmingham and struggled on my journey with many obstacles in my path. After graduating with honours, I embarked on a career dedicated to upholding the rule of law and defending the rights of those who have been wronged.

Throughout my legal career, I have gained extensive experience in various areas of law, including civil rights, employment law, and criminal defence.

Advocacy and Community Engagement:

Beyond the courtroom, I have been a tireless advocate for social justice and community empowerment. I have volunteered my time and expertise to numerous grassroots organisations, providing legal assistance to underserved communities and championing causes related to human rights, immigration food security.

My ability to build bridges and forge consensus among diverse stakeholders makes me a unifying force in the community. As a seasoned lawyer, I possess the analytical skills, critical thinking abilities, and legal expertise necessary to navigate complex policy issues and enact meaningful reforms.