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A Place Making Strategy for Wrexham

Potential Socio-Economic Impacts of the Award of City Status

Prepared for Wrexham County Borough Council

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Executive Summary

i. The UK Government's application form for city status invites a town to demonstrate why it deserves city status by providing information on the profile, key features, and impression of the area. Although the application process does not ask a town to provide evidence of the economic benefits of city status, much of the discussion in Wrexham and elsewhere in the UK has been framed in economic terms.

ii. There is no published evidence on the economic benefits (or disbenefits) of the award of city status, so to address this gap Wrexham CBC commissioned this independent study to specifically examine the potential economic benefits for towns like Wrexham.

iii. The study has found that the towns awarded city status have experienced economic growth, but ONS data does not show an acceleration in the rate of growth following the award of city status. However, the comparative analysis of new cities and towns suggests there is a potential for benefit where city status has been used to strengthen other economic and regeneration initiatives in an area.

iv. The comparative case studies shows that areas which have been successful in gaining city status identify a range of benefits including:

- Helping to boost local pride which, in turn, may have economic benefits
- Providing a new platform to promote the city and raise ambitions
- Creating opportunities for anchor institutions, economic clusters, and sectors to raise their profile
- Enabling some cities to attract major projects such as a university and enterprise zone, which they might not otherwise have secured as towns
- Allowing relationships to be developed with other cities and helping them to collectively 'punch above their weight', securing both public and private investment and collaborating with Government on strategic issues, particularly in Scotland
- Providing a reason for, and focus for re-branding campaigns
- Perceived successes in attracting inward investment - attributed to city awareness and the infrastructure and facilities they offer e.g. business incubator, high-profile local businesses and organisations, alongside city status
- Higher expectations of placemaking with cities thought of as more vibrant places to live, work, and invest
- Cities with an accessible rural hinterland are seen as very attractive places

v. The evidence suggests the opportunity for a range of potential benefits for Wrexham from city status if it links such an award to delivering more ambitious place shaping plans and investment strategies, connected to local attributes such as the University, employment and transport infrastructure and cultural attractions.

1 The Impacts of City Status

1.0.1 This paper looks at the evidence for the socio-economic impacts of the award of city status. It comprises three parts:

- Consultations with cities, including some that have been awarded city status since 2002, and others that have been cities for longer
- Analysis of socio-economic data on the performance of places that have been awarded city status since 2002
- Comparative analysis of the socio-economic performance of new cities against long-standing cities, unsuccessful bidders for city status, and towns that have never bid for city status

1.1 Perceived impacts of city status

1.1.1 We have undertaken consultations with five new cities and several longer-established cities to identify the perceived impacts of city status. The new cities are: Chelmsford, Newport, Perth, Preston, and Stirling. The established cities are Carlisle, Hereford, Lancaster, and Worcester.

1.1.2 The messages from these consultations are set out below.

Economic performance

1.1.3 None of the cities consulted have undertaken research into the impact of city status, so they cannot attribute their economic performance directly to this. Whilst all have seen growth, this is credited to a range of factors, including local activity as well as the performance of the national and global economies. Some consultees think that their status as a city has helped them to attract major projects such as a university and an enterprise zone, which they might not otherwise have secured as towns.

1.1.4 Most consultees have suggested that it is functions such as universities, enterprise zones, business incubators and others that drive further economic growth, so there may be a virtuous circle in which high-level functions and city status reinforce each other.

Expectations of the benefits of city status

1.1.5 Most consultees have mentioned city pride as the main reason for bidding, and the main benefit of city status. This may, in-turn, have some economic benefits.

1.1.6 In Newport there was broad support for bidding for city status, with a view that most residents wanted it. The successful bid followed an earlier unsuccessful one. It was thought that there might be some economic benefit from city status, but this was not a significant reason for bidding. City status was sought as recognition of the history, functions, recent profile, and pride in the place, rather than to try and stimulate these.

Making the most of city status

1.1.7 Newport ran an awareness-raising campaign when bidding for city status, and then used it as part of a re-branding campaign once successful, marketing itself as the 'gateway city' into Wales. The marketing campaign was more about the attributes and advantages of Newport than city status per se.

1.1.8 Perth has obtained many benefits from city status, but these are mostly specific to its Scottish context and are discussed further below. Preston has used city status as a marketing tool, and this is discussed further below.

Inward investment

1.1.9 Many of the cities consulted have been successful in attracting inward investment. Their success is largely attributed to awareness of them and the infrastructure and facilities they offer (e.g. university, enterprise zone, business incubator, high-profile local businesses and organisations), although city status was seen as helpful alongside these. It has been suggested that city status creates higher expectations of a place, and cities are thought of as more vibrant places to live, work, and invest.

1.1.10 The award of city status to Perth allowed it to join the Scottish Cities Alliance which lobbies for its members and markets them as investment locations. Working alongside six other cities means that Perth is able to play a part in marketing activity (e.g. MIPIM in Cannes and other global marketing opportunities) that it could not do on its own. It also features its city status in its own marketing material.

Securing Government support for economic development

1.1.11 In Wales and England city status does not confer access to any dedicated funding.

1.1.12 Whilst the UK Government's recent focus has been on promoting regeneration in towns, some places' status as a city has not prevented them from securing support. This suggests that Government is pragmatic about the status of settlements, and is interested in needs and opportunities, so city status is neither a help nor a hindrance in securing support.

1.1.13 In Scotland the award of city status to Perth gave it access to the Cities Investment Fund. The total fund is £7 million, so the amounts secured have been relatively small. However, these have been used to carry out feasibility studies and match and unlock other funds (including EU funding) and secure pilot study funds which have then had a greater impact. This would not have been achieved without city status.

Tourism

1.1.14 Historical and modern attractions, the quality of the built environment, the range of leisure and hospitality functions in a settlement and its proximity to attractive natural environments are thought to be more important than city status in attracting tourists. However, Preston has used its city status and royal crest in its tourism marketing. This was done gradually over time when refreshing materials rather than incurring a significant cost immediately. Preston did brand itself as 'England's newest city' for a decade until others were awarded city status. It is considering using the 20th anniversary of its city status as a marketing theme.

1.1.15 Established cities have made use of historic attractions to appeal to tourists. Carlisle is a part of the Historic Cities group and has used its long history to brand itself. Similarly, Worcester collaborates with the nearby cathedral cities of Gloucester and Hereford for joint marketing purposes.

1.1.16 When Perth secured city status Visit Scotland included it in its marketing for city breaks and ScotRail used it in its marketing, thus increasing external awareness. These helped to create an increase in short breaks to Perth before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Inter-city collaboration

1.1.17 City-status has allowed Perth to join the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA). Membership of the SCA has allowed Perth to punch above its weight, securing both public and private investment, and collaborate with Scottish and UK Government on strategic issues. Membership of the SCA is exclusive to cities, which means that city-status is a necessary condition for collaboration in this group.

1.1.18 Worcester has benefited from collaboration with cities of a similar size, including Gloucester and Hereford. Collaboration has allowed Worcester benefit from these cities sharing experience and knowledge with one another. The Three Choirs festival is a music festival, whose location rotates between the cathedrals of each of these three cities, furthering cultural and economic ties. Carlisle similarly benefits from being a member of the Historic Cities group which advertises cathedral cities together to heighten awareness of them. Whilst there is likely to be an economic benefit of this collaborative activity, it is difficult to measure.

1.1.19 Carlisle is also part of the Key Cities group. Since joining, membership is thought to have brought benefits to the city. However, membership of this body is not contingent on the legal status of being a city. Wrexham, for instance, is a recent member of this organisation despite it not having city-status.

Rural hinterland

1.1.20 Being a city with an accessible rural hinterland is seen as an important attribute by some. With the Covid-induced move towards more working from home, the ability to live in a rural area with easy access to the facilities of a city is seen as very attractive.

1.1.21 From a tourism perspective, the combination of city and rural attributes is a helpful marketing message.

No negative impacts

1.1.22 None of the cities that were recently awarded this status have seen any negative impacts from it.

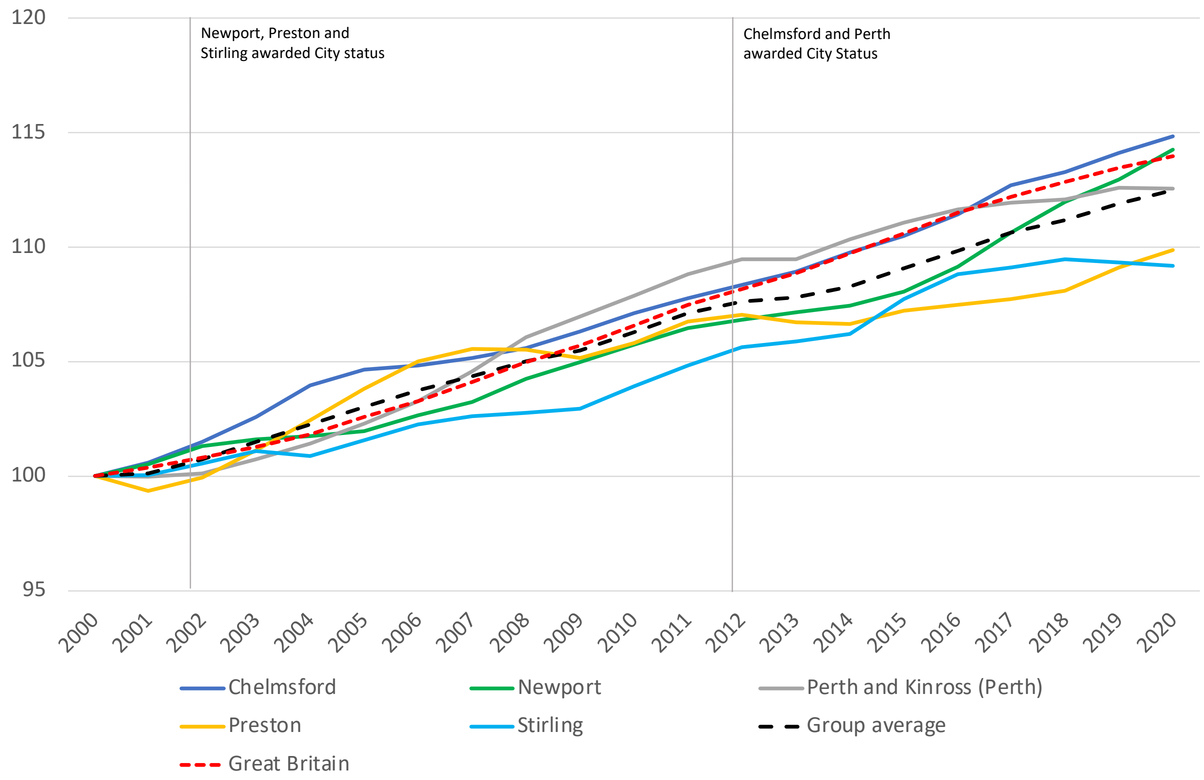
1.2 The performance of new cities

1.2.1 We have looked at five cities that have been awarded city status since 2002: Newport, Perth, and Stirling which received city status in 2002; and Chelmsford and Preston which received city status in 2012. These are the most similar to Wrexham of the nine cities that have been awarded city status since 2000.

Population change

1.2.2 All five of these new cities have seen ongoing population growth since 2000, and the award of city status does not appear to have had an impact on this.

Figure 1.1: Population Change in New Cities, Indexed to 2000

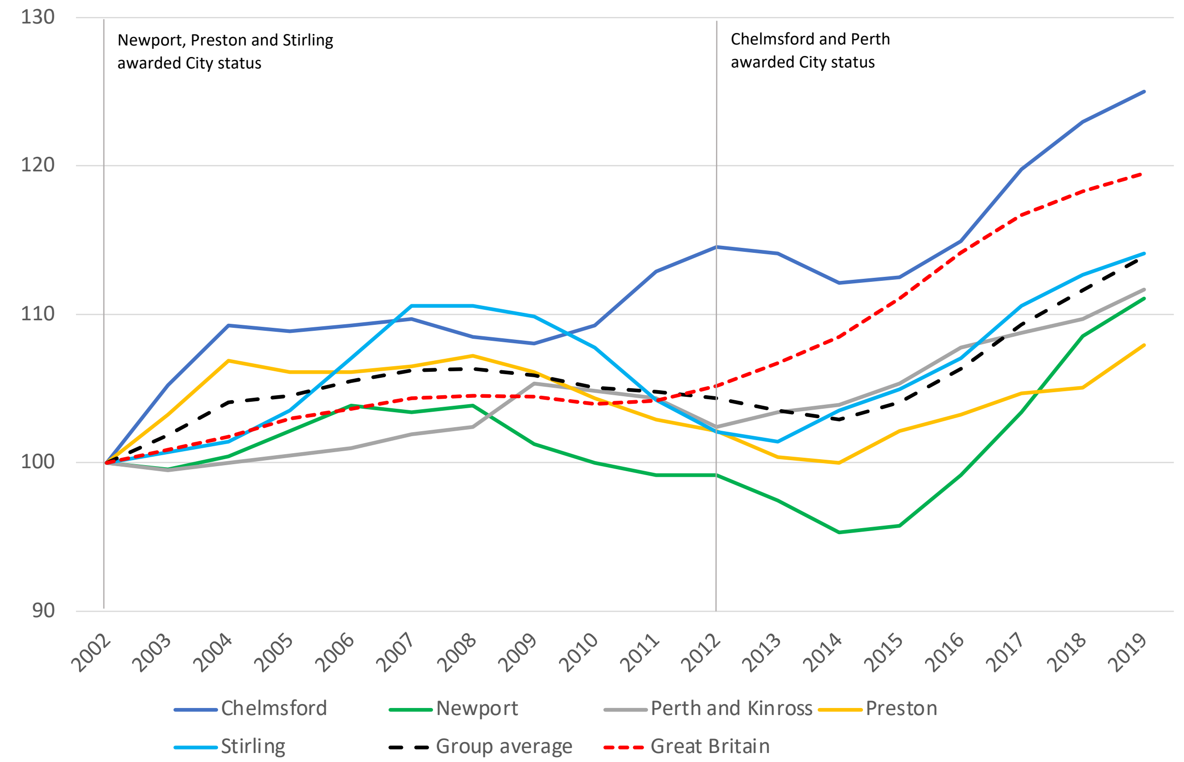


Source: ONS, Population Estimates 2021

Employment change

1.2.3 Employment change has been more turbulent than population growth over the period, but all five of the new cities have seen overall growth between 2000 and 2019. The award of city status has not impacted on the pattern of employment change in the new cities.

Figure 1.2: Rolling average total jobs of New Cities, Indexed to 2000

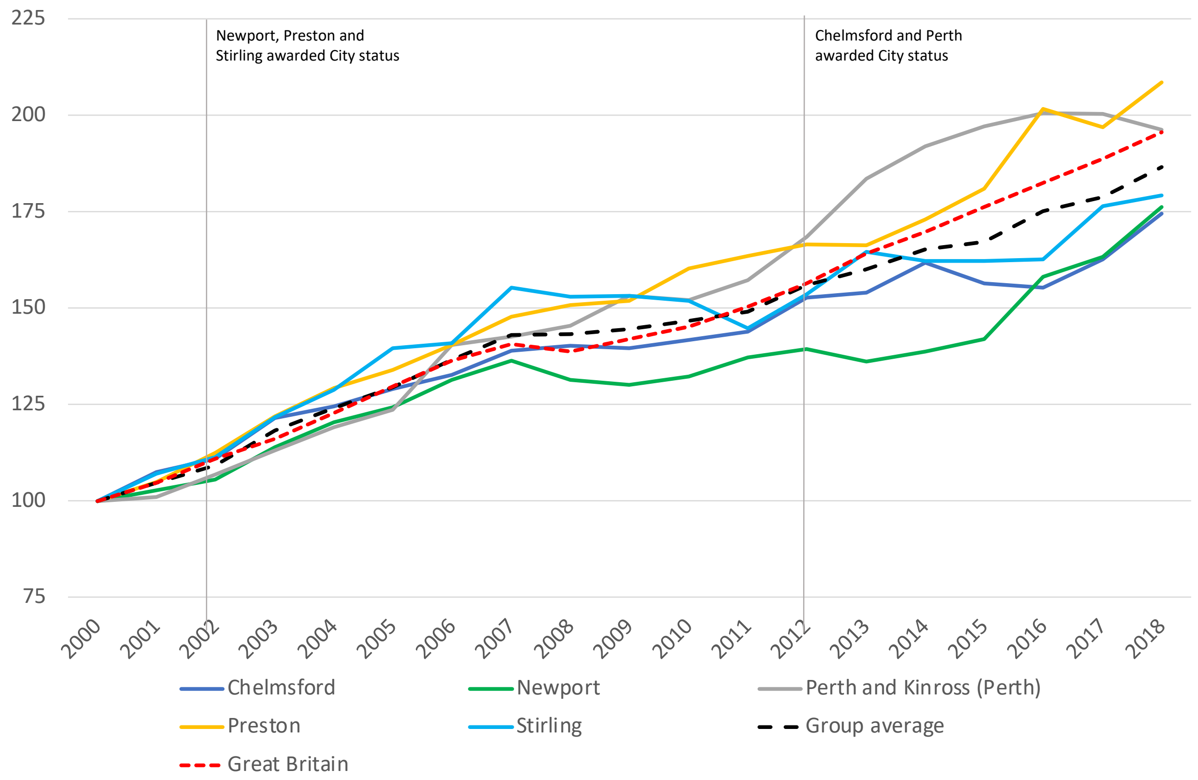


Source: ONS, Jobs density 2020

Economic change

1.2.4 Economic output is considered in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA). Since 2020. Since 2020, all the new cities have seen fairly consistent growth in GVA. The award of city status does not appear to have had an impact on the trajectory of GVA growth.

Figure 1.3: New Cities Gross Value Added at Current Base Prices, Indexed to 2000



Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2021

1.3 The relative performance of new cities

1.3.1 This section tests whether the award of city status has had any measurable effect on the socio-economic performance of settlements (i.e. towns and cities) that are similar in size, economic structure, and urban form to Wrexham. To test for differences, the performance of four groups of settlements has been compared over the last 20 years. These four groups are:

- **New cities** – five places which have been awarded city status within the last 20 years
- **Past bidders** – five towns that bid for city status but were not successful
- **Cities** – five places that have had city status for more than 20 years
- **Towns** – five places that have not bid for city status within the last 20 years

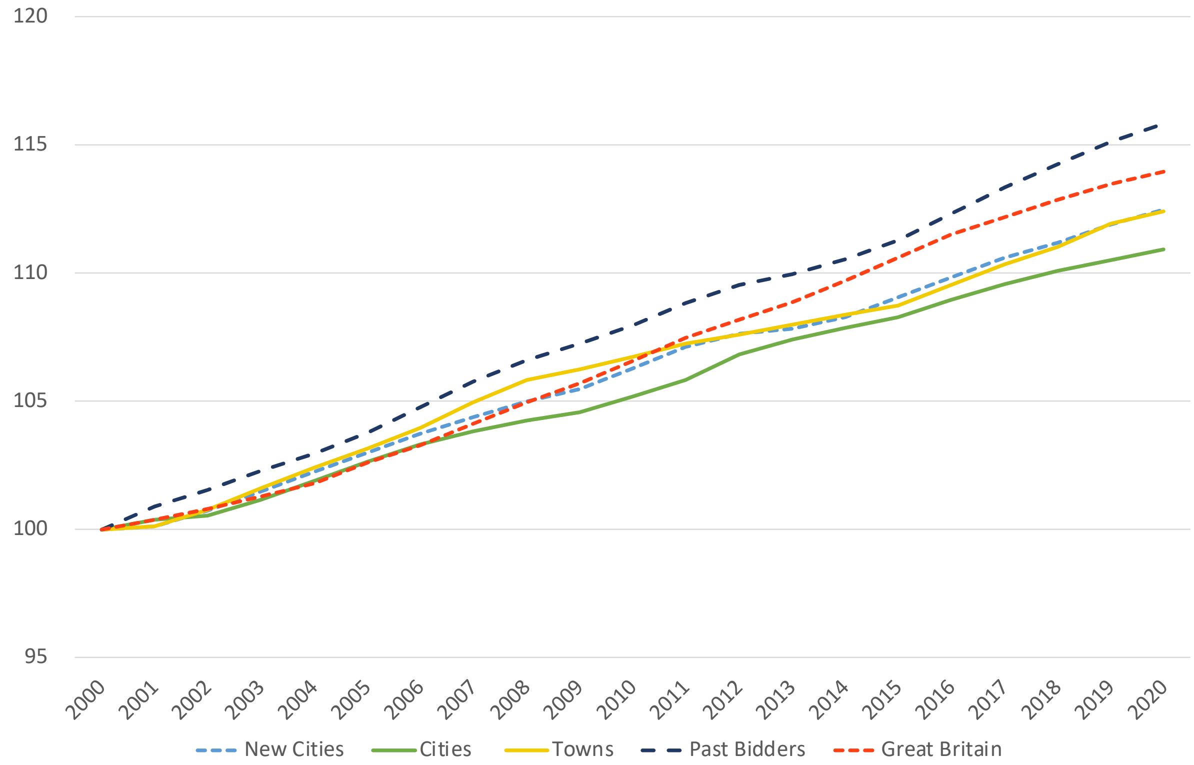
New cities	Past bidders	Cities	Towns
Chelmsford	Aberystwyth	Carlisle	Barry
Newport	Blackburn	Hereford	Bridgend
Perth	Corby	Lancaster	Kidderminster
Preston	Shrewsbury	Lincoln	Scunthorpe
Stirling	Telford	Worcester	Stafford

1.3.2 Three socio-economic variables have been compared for these four groups: annual change in population, annual change in employment, and annual change in Gross Value Added (GVA). All data used for the comparisons has been sourced from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Change in population

1.3.3 There is some variation in population growth within each of the four groups. However, when the average growth of each of the four groups is compared, there is a very strong correlation between them. ***New cities*** have not out-performed the other groups, and ***past bidders*** have seen higher population growth over the last 20 years than new cities. Settlements did not experience a change in population growth rate after the award of city status. Therefore, there is no evidence that the award of city status has led to increased growth in population.

Figure 1.4: Change in Population of the Four Comparator Groups



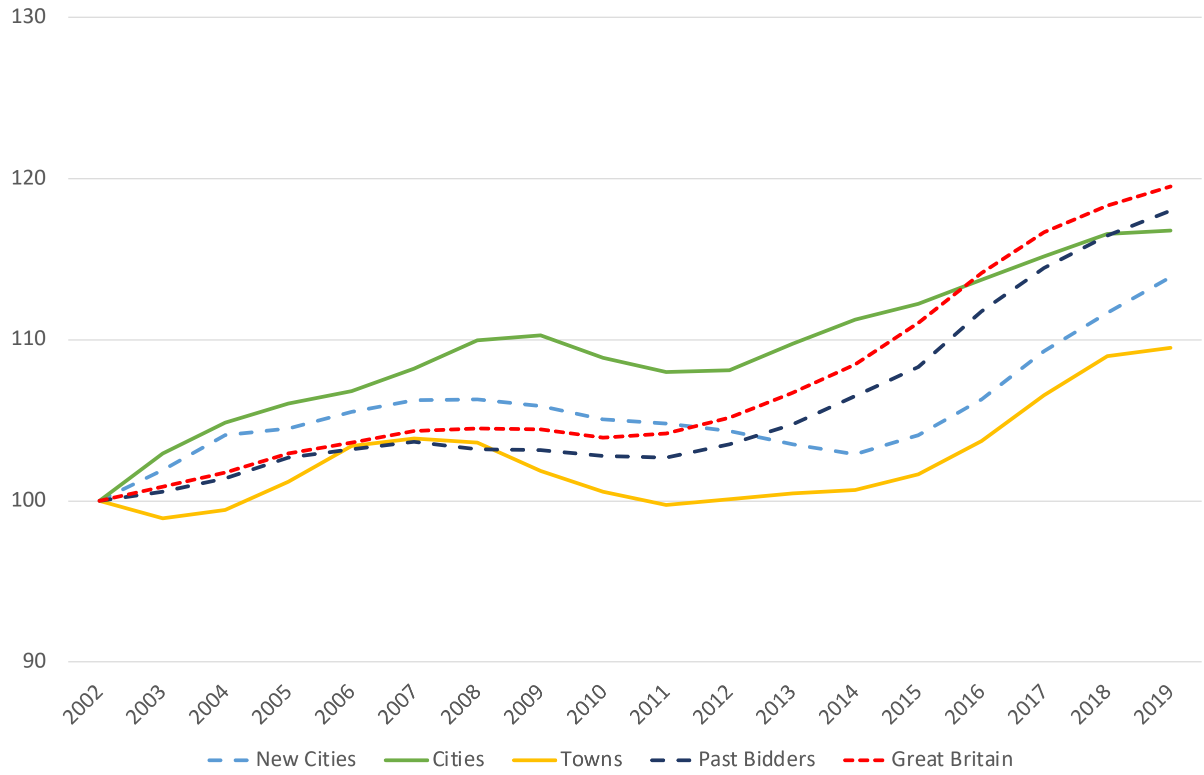
Source: ONS, Population estimates 2021

Change in employment

1.3.4 Data on change in jobs is more volatile than data on change in population, so it has been smoothed over a three-year period for the purposes of presentation. All ***new cites*** have experienced growth in jobs over the last 20 years, but there is no evidence that the award of city status led to any change in the trajectory of jobs growth in these places.

1.3.5 When compared to other three groups, ***new cities*** have not on average performed better than ***past bidders*** or ***cities***. Therefore, there is no evidence that the award of city status has led to increased growth in employment.

Figure 1.5: Change in Total Jobs of the Four Comparator Groups



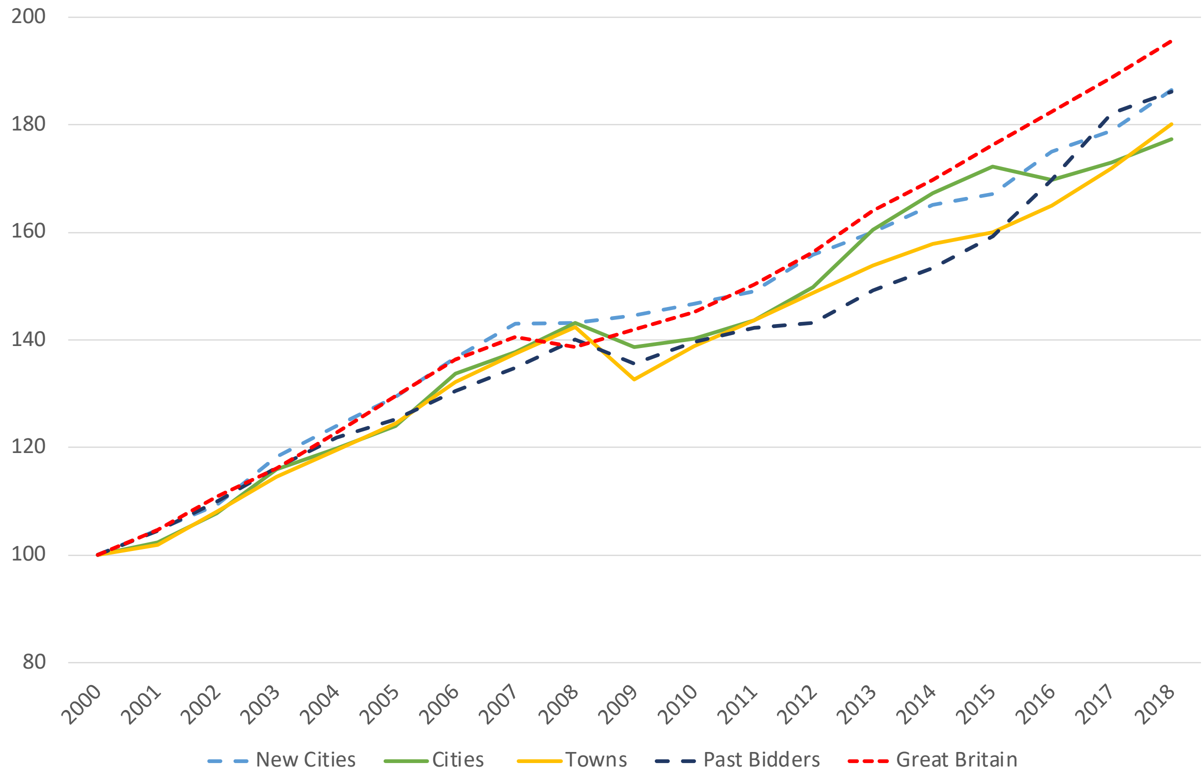
Source: ONS, Jobs Density, 2020

Change in Gross Value Added (GVA)

1.3.6 GVA is a measure of the value added by businesses and workers in a local economy. All the ***new cities*** saw a growth in GVA over the last 20 years, but there is no evidence that the growth in GVA changed after the award of city status. When compared to the other three groups, new cities have not seen a statistically significant difference in growth over the period.

1.3.7 Therefore, there is no evidence that the award of city status has led to increased growth in GVA.

Figure 1.6: Gross Value Added at Current Base Prices for the Four Comparator Groups



Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2021

Overall message from comparative data analysis

1.3.8 The analysis of ONS data on the change in population, jobs, and GVA across 20 settlements that are similar in size and nature to Wrexham does not provide any evidence that the award of city status has had any impact on growth. ***New cities*** have not seen a statistical difference in performance to ***past bidders***, ***cities***, and ***towns***.

2 Appendix 1: Selection of Comparator Settlements

2.0.1 Since 2000 the award of city status has been decided through a competitive bidding process. There have been three rounds of bidding for city status since 2000 - one to celebrate the millennium, one for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002, and one for the Diamond Jubilee in 2022. Across these three competitions 48 settlements in Great Britain applied for city status[1].

2.0.2 We examine the economic performance of settlements across two categories:

- Those that have applied for city status and been successful (hereafter referred to as ***new cities***)
- Those that have applied for city status and not been successful (hereafter referred to as ***past bidders***)

2.0.3 We will also look at the performance of two control groups:

- Cities that had city status prior to 2000 (hereafter referred to as ***cities***)
- Settlements that have never applied for city status (hereafter referred to as ***towns***)

2.0.4 to make the analysis relevant to Wrexham we have identified settlements that have similar characteristics; notably:

- Have a similar population to Wrexham (in terms of Built-up Area, Local Authority Area, and the scale of these relative to each other)
- Have a similar industrial structure to Wrexham
- Are a discrete settlement within a local authority area that has an otherwise rural hinterland i.e. is not part of a larger conurbation

2.0.5 We look at a total of five settlements in each category. The following section sets out how we have selected these settlements with further details on the key assets of the ***new cities*** and ***past bidders*** set out in Appendix 1.

2.1 New Cities

2.1.1 There have been nine successful applications for city status since 2000 from settlements across Great Britain - two from Wales, three from Scotland, and four from England, set out in Figure 2.1 below.

2.1.2 Immediately excluded from consideration as comparator areas are St Asaph (due to its population of approximately 3,500 people), and Inverness in the Scottish Highlands (due to its remote location).

2.1.3 For the remaining settlements we have examined the population of both the Built-up Area and the local authority area, and the industrial structure of the local authority.

[1] Note that we have excluded settlements in Northern Ireland due to difficulties in obtaining comparable data with which to conduct analysis.

Figure 2.1: New Cities

Millennium (2000)
Brighton & Hove
Inverness
Wolverhampton
Golden Jubilee (2002)
Newport (Wales)
Preston
Stirling
Diamond Jubilee (2012)
Chelmsford
Perth
St Asaph

Figure 2.2: Population of and Industrial Structure of New Cities

	Built-up Area Population (2019)	Local Authority Population (2020)	Similarity of Local Authority Industrial Structure[2]
Brighton & Hove	244,917	291,700	0.66
Chelmsford	118,759	179,500	0.78
Newport	136,078**	156,447	0.89
Perth	*	151,900	0.71
Preston	135,677	144,100	0.78
Stirling	*	94,100	0.66
Wrexham	**65,356**	**136,100**	**1.00**
Wolverhampton	246,247	264,400	0.93

*Built-Up Area definitions are not available for Scottish locations

**This is for the Built-Up Subdivision Area of Newport

Source: ONS Population Estimates, 2021; ONS Business Register & Employment Survey, 2019; modelling by Hardisty Jones Associates

2.1.4 From analysis of the data set out in the figure above, and based on the selection criteria in paragraph 2.0.4, we propose to exclude Brighton & Hove and Wolverhampton from consideration due to their size. Therefore, the proposed comparators in the ***new cities*** category are:

- Chelmsford
- Newport
- Perth
- Preston
- Stirling

[2] This number has been calculated by taking the percentage employment in each broad industrial group across each Local Authority and comparing it to Wrexham. A score of 1 would be a perfect match and a score of zero would indicate no similarities

2.2 Past Bidders

2.2.1 39 settlements have unsuccessfully applied for city status in Great Britain since 2000, shown in the figure below.

Figure 2.3: Past Bidders

England	Wales	Scotland
Millennium (2000)		
Blackburn, Blackpool, Bolton, Chelmsford (later awarded), Colchester, Croydon, Doncaster, Dover, Guildford, Ipswich, Luton, Maidstone, Medway, Middlesbrough, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Preston (later awarded), Reading, Shrewsbury & Atcham, Southend on Sea, Southwark, Stockport, Swindon, Telford, Warrington	Aberystwyth, Machynlleth, Newport (later awarded), Newtown, St Asaph (later awarded), Wrexham	Ayr, Paisley, Stirling (later awarded)
Golden Jubilee (2002)		
Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Chelmsford (later awarded), Colchester, Croydon, Doncaster, Dover, Greenwich, Guildford, Ipswich, Luton, Maidstone, Medway, Middlesbrough, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Reading, Shrewsbury and Atcham, Southend-on-Sea, Stockport, Swindon, Telford, Warrington, Wirral.	Aberystwyth, Machynlleth, Newtown, St Asaph (later awarded), Wrexham	Ayr, Dumfries, Paisley
Diamond Jubilee (2012)		
Bolton, Bournemouth, Colchester, Corby, Croydon, Doncaster, Dorchester, Dudley, Gateshead, Goole, Luton, Medway, Middlesbrough, Milton Keynes, Reading, Southend, St Austell, Stockport, Tower Hamlets	Wrexham	

2.2.2 Given the large number of settlements in this category we have immediately removed settlements in Scotland and the South of England from consideration as comparator areas.

2.2.3 This leaves 14 settlements to select from, shown in the figure below. As with the selection of the ***new cities*** above, we examine the population of these settlements relative to Wrexham and the industrial structure of the Local Authority.

Figure 2.4: Population of and Industrial Structure of Past Bidders

	Built-up Area Population (2019)	Local Authority Population (2020)	Similarity of Local Authority Industrial Structure[2]
Aberystwyth	16,476	72,895	0.57
Blackburn	120,932	150,030	0.97
Blackpool	145,821	138,381	0.78
Bolton	180,134	288,248	0.88
Corby	65,985	350,448	0.79
Doncaster	116,834	312,785	0.86
Dudley	84,813	322,363	0.93
Gateshead	122,249	201,950	0.84
Goole	22,574	343,201	0.92
Machynlleth	2,248	133,030	0.65
Middlesbrough	177,354	141,285	0.80
Newtown	11,222	133,030	0.65
Northampton	230,031	406,733	0.76
Shrewsbury & Atcham	76,621*	325,415	0.83
Stockport	111,694	294,197	0.76
Telford	152,222	181,322	0.91
Warrington	172,684	209,397	0.58
Wrexham	**65,356**	**136,100**	**1.00**

*The Built-up Area population is just for Shrewsbury

Source: ONS Population Estimates, 2021; ONS Business Register & Employment Survey, 2019; modelling by Hardisty Jones Associates

2.2.4 Using the selection criteria set out in paragraph 2.0.4 we have selected the following five settlements in the ***past bidders*** category:

- Aberystwyth
- Blackburn
- Corby
- Shrewsbury
- Telford

2.3 Cities

2.3.1 In total there are 50 ***cities*** across England and Wales, shown in the figure below.

Figure 2.5: Cities in England and Wales prior to 2000

Welsh Cities	English Cities
Bangor Cardiff St David's Swansea	Bath, Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Carlisle, Cambridge, Canterbury, Chester, Chichester, Coventry, Derby, Durham, Ely, Exeter, Gloucester, Hereford, Kingston-Upon-Hull, Lancaster, Leeds, Leicester, Lichfield, Lincoln, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford, Peterborough, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Ripon, Salford, Salisbury, Sheffield, Southampton, St Albans, Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland, Truro, Wakefield, Wells, Westminster, Winchester, Worcester, York

2.3.2 In keeping with the selection criteria used in Para 2.0.4 we have eliminated ***cities*** in the South of England from consideration. We have also chosen to eliminate those ***cities*** with a population greater than 300,000 and less than 18,000.

2.3.3 This leaves 19 ***cities*** for consideration, shown in the table below.

Figure 2.6: Population of and Industrial Structure of Cities

	Built-up Area Population (2019)	Local Authority Population (2020)	Similarity of Local Authority Industrial Structure[2]
Bangor	18,322	125,171	0.69
Carlisle	78,416	108,524	0.87
Chester	94,339	343,823	0.76
Derby	280,001	256,814	0.94
Durham	55,507	533,149	0.93
Gloucester	162,489	129,709	0.83
Hereford	63,783	193,615	0.83
Kingston-Upon-Hull	288,028	259,126	0.95
Lancaster	51,932	148,119	0.76
Lichfield	34,169	105,637	0.83
Lincoln	106,415	100,049	0.86
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	287,535	306,824	0.70
Oxford	173,893	151,584	0.52
Peterborough	178,805	202,626	0.75
Salford	102,763	262,697	0.70
Stoke-on-Trent	278,137	256,622	0.92
Wakefield	107,546	351,592	0.88
Worcester	102,791	100,265	0.86
York	164,369	211,012	0.74
Wrexham	**65,356**	**136,100**	**1.00**

Source: ONS Population Estimates, 2021; ONS Business Register & Employment Survey, 2019; modelling by Hardisty Jones Associates

2.3.4 Using the selection criteria set out in Para 2.0.4 we have selected the following five ***cities*** for the control group:

- Carlisle
- Hereford
- Lancaster
- Lincoln
- Worcester

2.4 Towns

2.4.1 There is no definitive list of ***towns*** in England and Wales, so the process of identifying towns for consideration began by looking at settlements in a suitable location, and with a suitable industrial structure. This process resulted in a list of 13 towns as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2.7: Population of and Industrial Structure of Towns

	Built-up Area Population (2019)	Local Authority Population (2020)	Similarity of Local Authority Industrial Structure[2]
Barry	57,920	147,539	0.85
Bridgend	62,510	150,030	0.82
Burnley	154,212	89,344	0.94
Crewe	79,070	386,667	0.83
Grimsby	133,055	159,364	0.95
Hartlepool	90,074	93,836	0.91
Kidderminster	59,418	101,139	0.76
Llanelli	50,963	190,073	0.91
Merthyr Tydfil	45,109	60,424	0.95
Redditch	83,393	85,568	0.90
Stafford	71,999	137,858	0.91
Scunthorpe	83,583	172,748	0.93
Worksop	45,055	118,280	0.95
Wrexham	**65,356**	**136,100**	**1.00**

Source: ONS Population Estimates, 2021; ONS Business Register & Employment Survey, 2019; modelling by Hardisty Jones Associates

2.4.2 Using the selection criteria in Para 2.0.4 we have selected the following five ***towns*** for consideration:

- Barry
- Bridgend
- Kidderminster
- Scunthorpe
- Stafford

3 Appendix 2: Comparison of Recent Performance

3.0.1 To examine the socio-economic performance of settlements across the four categories we have looked at population, employment, and Gross Value Added (GVA). We examine the change in each of these metrics from the year 2000 (indexed to 100) for each of the five settlements within the four groups to assess changes within each group. We then calculate the average change across each metric for the four groups and compared these changes.

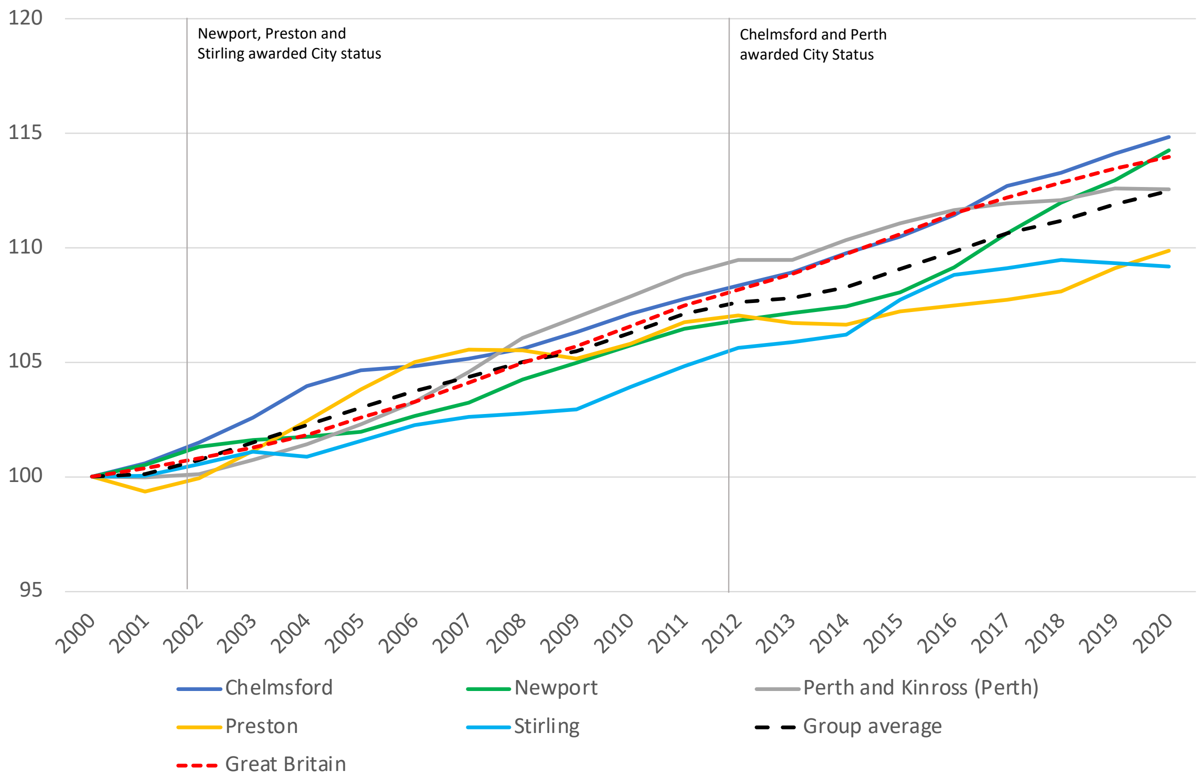
3.1 Population

3.1.1 ONS Population Estimates data from 2000 to 2020 has been used to conduct the analysis in the following section.

New Cities

3.1.2 Within the ***new cities*** group, there is little variation in population growth between 2000 and 2020 with approximately five percentage points separating the highest growth (Chelmsford) and the lowest (Stirling).

Figure 3.1: Population Change in New Cities, Indexed to 2000



Source: ONS, Population Estimates 2021

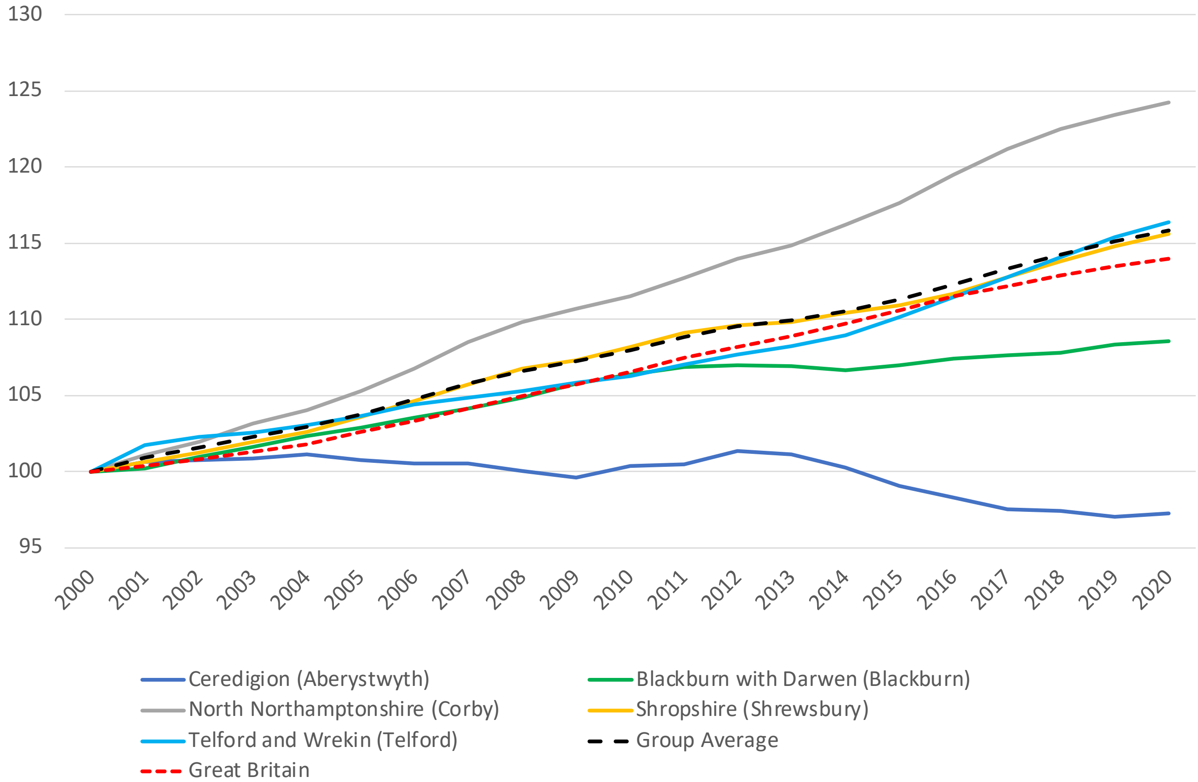
3.1.3 The group as a whole experienced a slightly lower rate of population growth than the national average over the period, but there was some variation around the benchmark with two of the five places seeing a greater increase and three seeing a lower increase.

3.1.4 Notably, the upward trend did not diverge after a place was awarded city status, and generally their populations grew at the same rate throughout the period.

Past Bidders

3.1.5 Population growth in the ***past bidders*** group has varied more than the in the ***new cities*** group between the years 2000 to 2020. Of the 20 settlements in this study, the only settlement to see a decline in its population was Aberystwyth (minus 3%), whilst Corby experienced the highest population growth, with a rise of 24%.

Figure 3.2: Population Changes of Past Bidders, Indexed to 2000



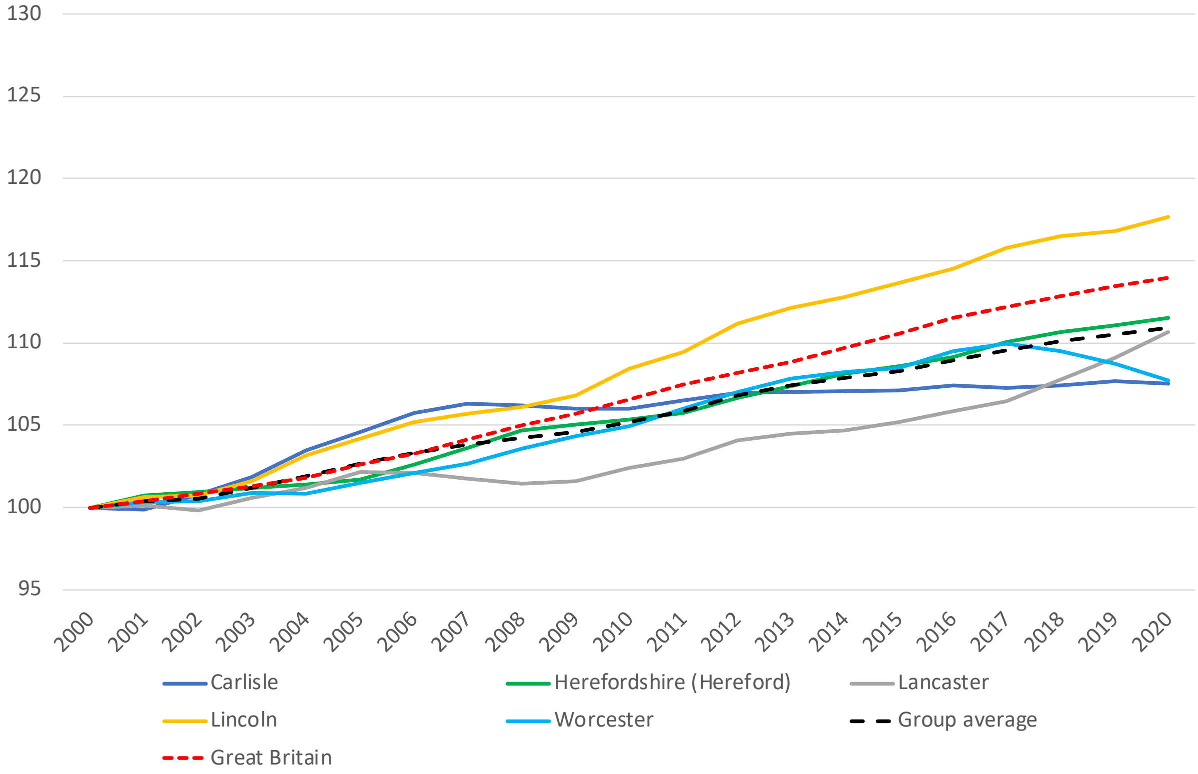
Source: ONS, Population Estimates 2021

3.1.6 Generally, the population each of the ***past bidders*** group grew at different rates however, the average for this group is in-line with that of GB as a whole.

Cities

3.1.7 Within the ***cities*** comparator group, there is some variation in population growth. Carlisle had the lowest change in population, an 8% increase over the period, whilst the highest growth was seen in Lincoln, where the population rose by 18%.

Figure 3.3 Population changes of Cities, Indexed to 2000



Source: ONS, Population Estimates 2021

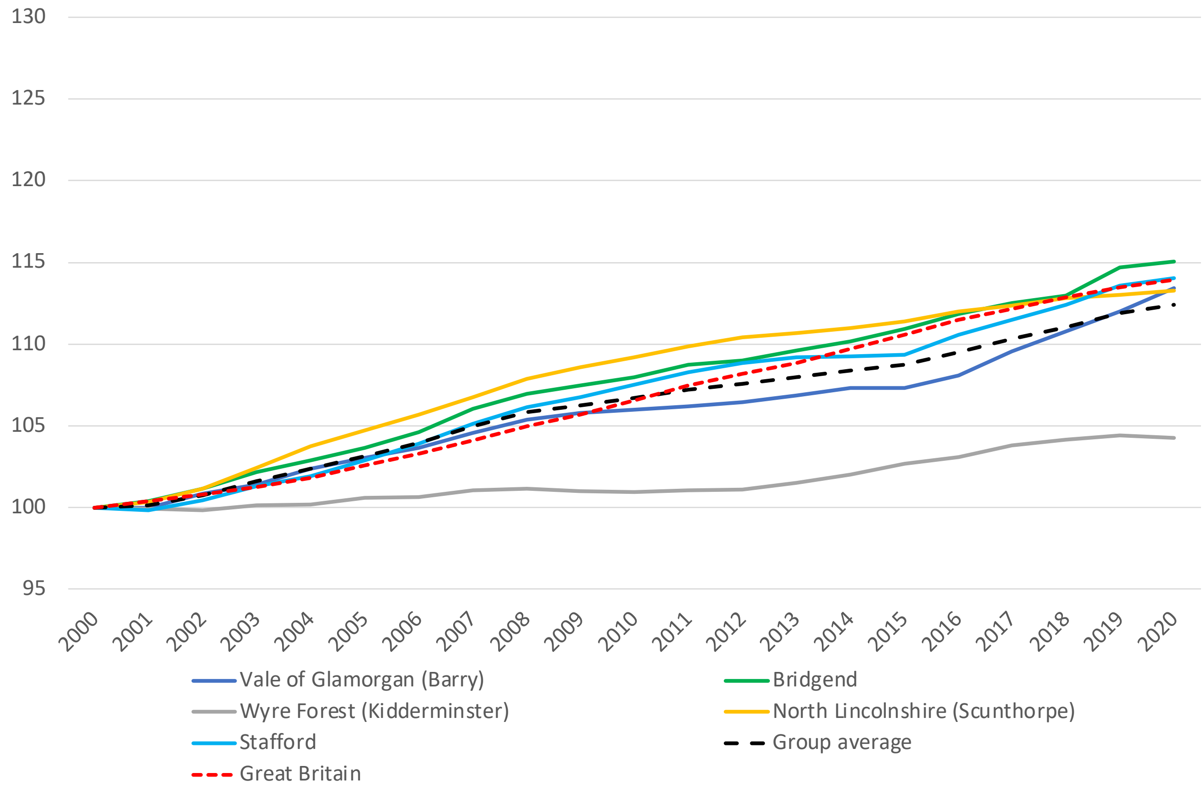
3.1.8 Lincoln is the only city that had consistently higher population growth than the national average throughout the period. By 2020, the population change experienced by the four other cities was less than the average population growth in Great Britain.

Towns

3.1.9 Within the group of ***towns***, only Kidderminster followed a different trend to the main pattern of population growth. The settlement saw a 4% rise in population over the period, whilst the majority of settlement's populations grew by around 13%.

3.1.10 Compared with Great Britain's average population change in the years 2000 to 2020, most ***towns*** saw populations grow at a faster rate.

Figure 3.4: Population changes of Towns, Indexed to 2000

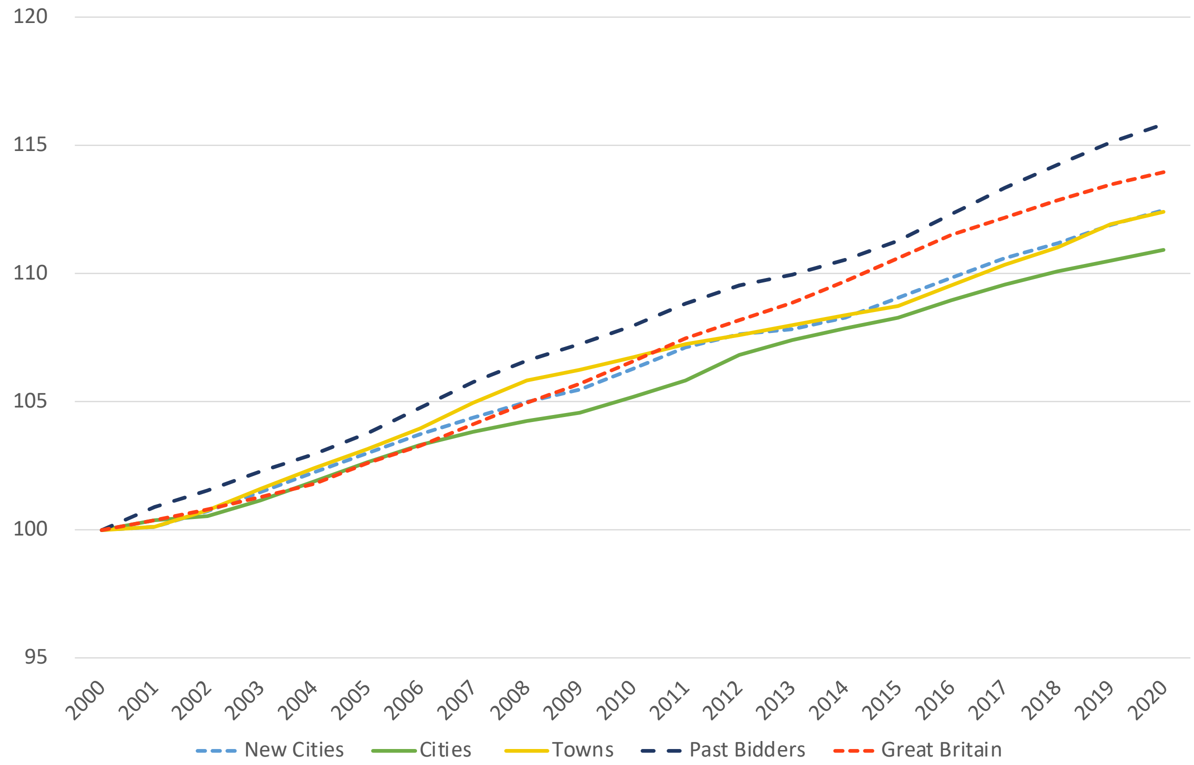


Source: ONS, Population Estimates 2021

Comparing the four groups

3.1.11 The average population of each group has increased at a relatively similar rate over the period 2000 to 2020. Although there is slight variation between the rates of change, the overall range of growth is narrow. The fastest growing group (***past bidders***) experienced growth at two percentage points higher than the national average whilst the slowest growing group (***cities***), saw growth only three percentage points lower than the national average.

Figure 3.5: Average Change in Population of Comparator Groups



Source: ONS, Population estimates 2021

3.1.12 Correlation calculations confirm the trend shown in the chart above. There is a correlation of more than 0.99 for the annual change in population between all four groups. This means that the average annual population change within each group has followed a similar growth trend over the period.

Figure 3.6: Correlation of Annual Population Change

	New cities	Cities	Towns	Past bidders
New cities	1.000			
Cities	0.998	1.000		
Towns	0.997	0.992	1.000	
Past bidders	0.999	0.997	0.997	1.000

Conclusion

3.1.13 There is some variation of population growth rates within each group, but the group averages were not significantly different. This suggests that the average annual growth rate in the population of ***new cities*** was not significantly different to that of ***past bidders***, or the control groups (***cities*** and ***towns***).

3.2 Total Employment

3.2.1 Analysis in the following section has been conducted using total jobs data from the ONS Jobs Density dataset. This is a workplace-based measure and includes employees, self-employed, government-supported trainees, and HM Forces.

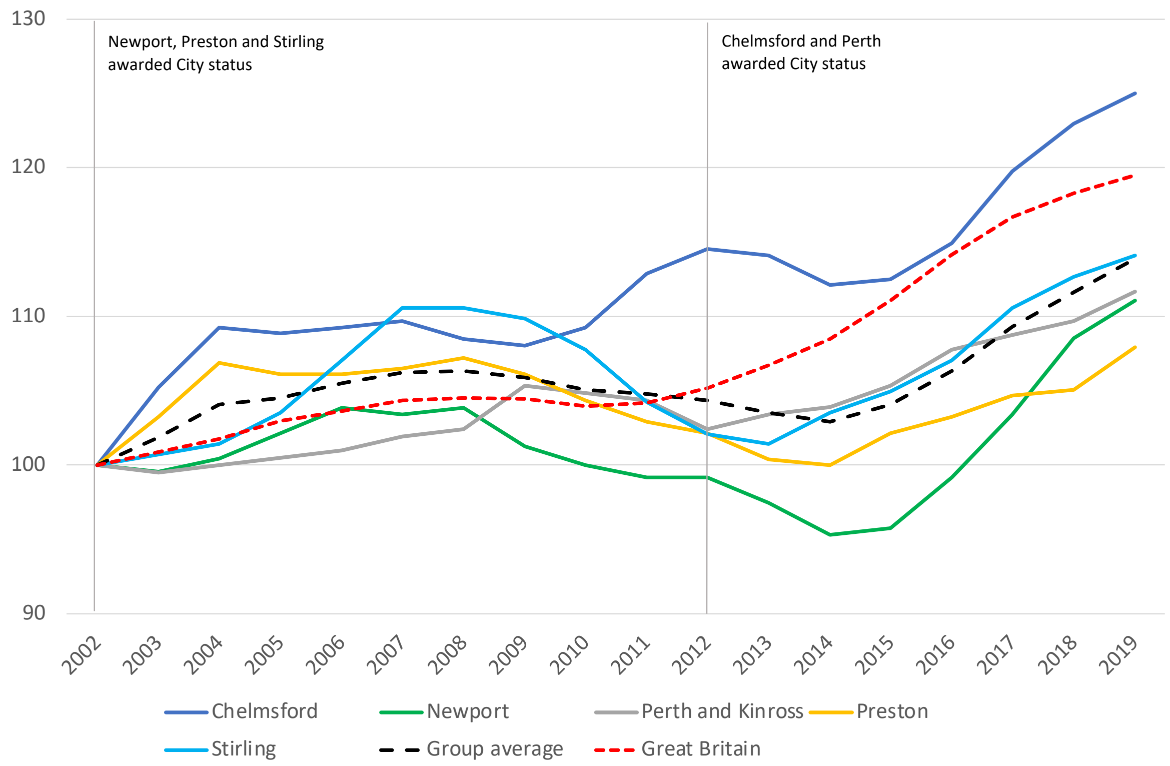
3.2.2 Data for smaller places tends to exhibit more volatility than data from larger areas due to smaller sample sizes. To account for this the data has been 'smoothed' to a three-year rolling average. This also helps show longer term trends in the data.

New Cities

3.2.3 All five ***new cities*** have experienced an increase in employment over the period from 2000 to 2019. Across all areas (including Great Britain) there is a notable difference between the trend seen between 2000 and 2010 and the following nine years.

3.2.4 Over the period, only Chelmsford experienced jobs growth (25% increase in 2019 on 2000) at a rate higher than Great Britain. This could likely be explained by its South East location and the benefits of the agglomeration effect of London. The smallest increase in total jobs was seen in Preston where there was an 8% increase.

Figure 3.7: Rolling average total jobs of New Cities, Indexed to 2000



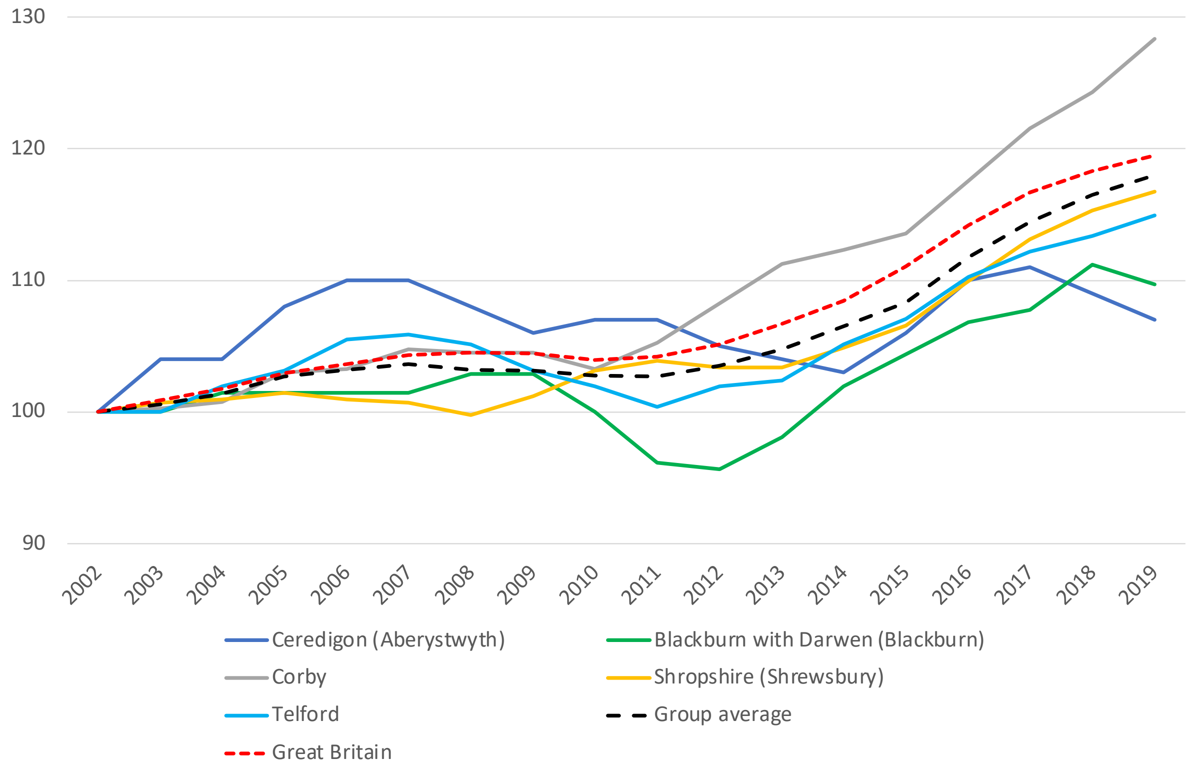
Source: ONS, Jobs density 2020

3.2.5 Following the award of city status in 2000 (2002 on the chart due to the use of rolling average), Newport, Preston and Stirling did not experience a divergence from their existing upward job growth trajectory. Following the award of city status Chelmsford and Perth did see job growth, however, this was in-line with the trend seen in Great Britain and likely reflects wider structural changes.

Past Bidders

3.2.6 There is a modest pattern of jobs growth amongst the ***past bidders*** group. Corby was the only settlement to end the period with higher growth in jobs than the average increase in Great Britain. Aberystwyth saw the lowest percentage increase in jobs, and by 2019 saw job growth of 7%.

Figure 3.8: Rolling average change in total jobs of Past Bidders, Indexed to 2000



Source: ONS, Jobs density 2020

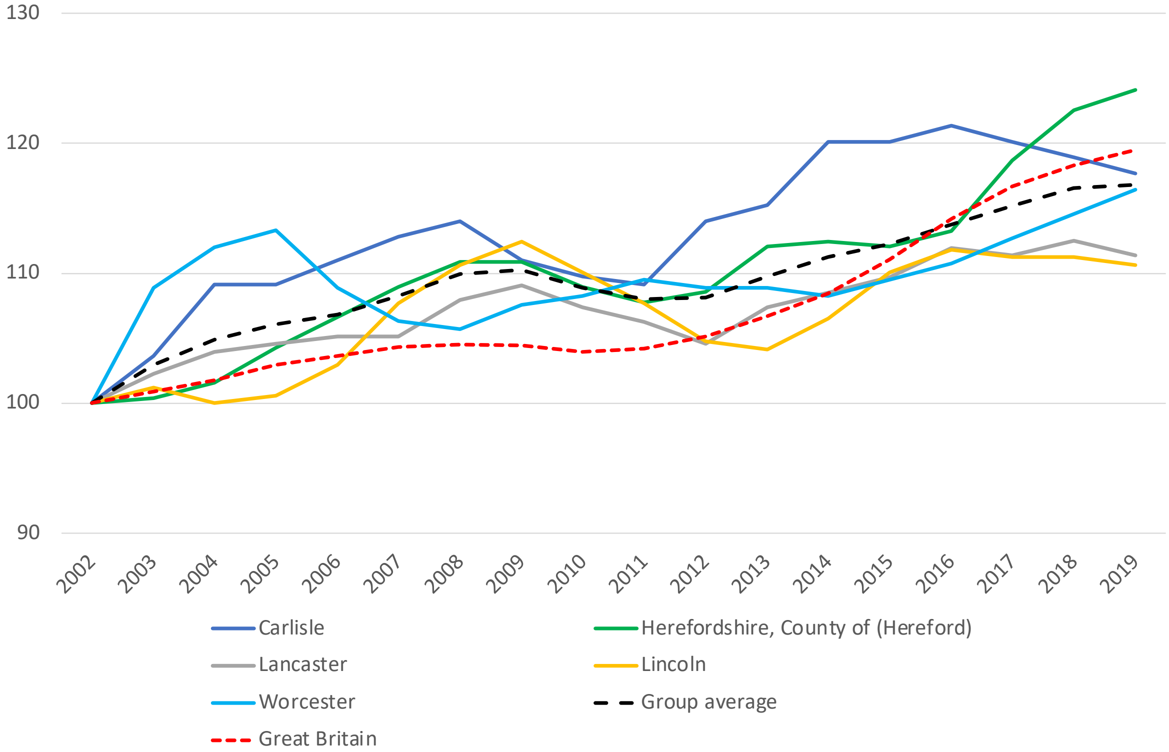
3.2.7 Aside from the final two years of the period where Aberystwyth and Blackburn saw a decline in jobs, the overall trend of each settlement is relatively similar.

Cities

3.2.8 There is some volatility in jobs growth throughout the period in each of the ***cities***. The largest difference was seen in 2014 when there was a 13-percentage point difference in jobs growth between Carlisle and Lincoln.

3.2.9 There is large variation in total jobs growth experienced by cities over the period from 2000 to 2019. However, for most of the period, cities outperformed the GB average.

Figure 3.9: Rolling average change in total jobs of Cities, Indexed to 2000

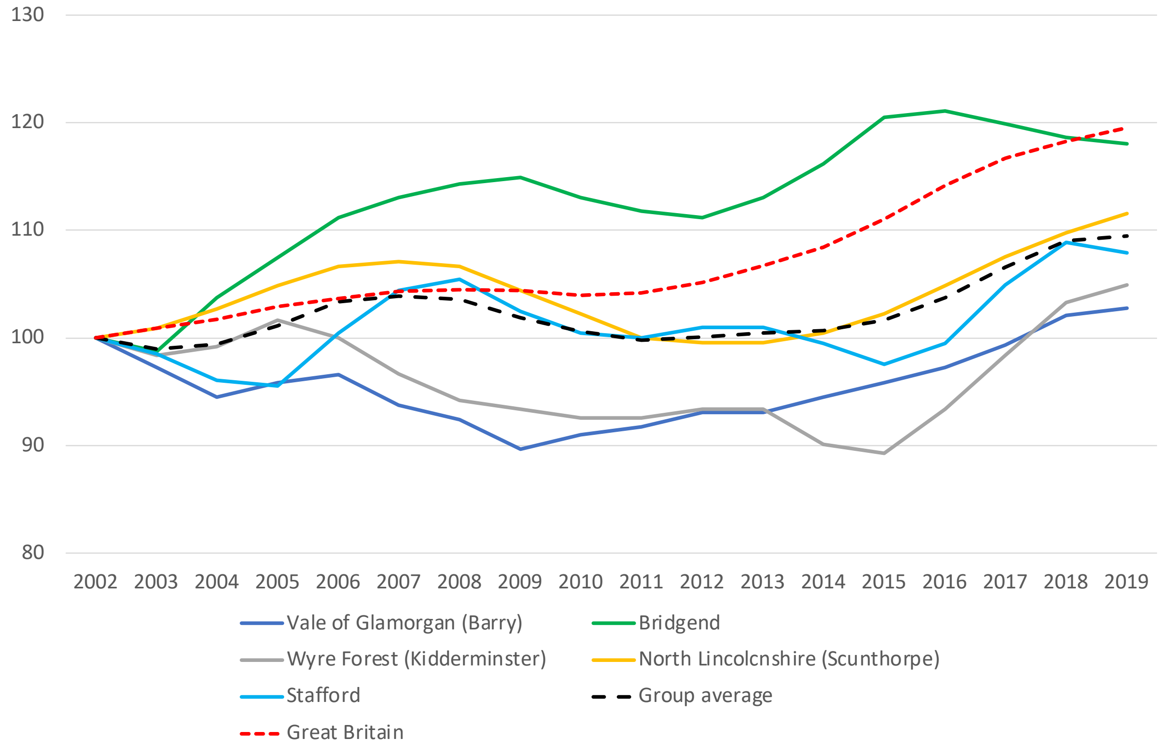


Source: ONS, Jobs density 2020

Towns

3.2.10 All ***towns*** saw a lower rate of growth than the national average by 2019. Notably, jobs in Bridgend did grow at a rate higher than the national average for much of the period but fell below in 2019. The group of towns also includes Barry, the lowest performing settlement (+3%).

Figure 3.10 Rolling average change in Total Jobs of Towns, Indexed to 2000



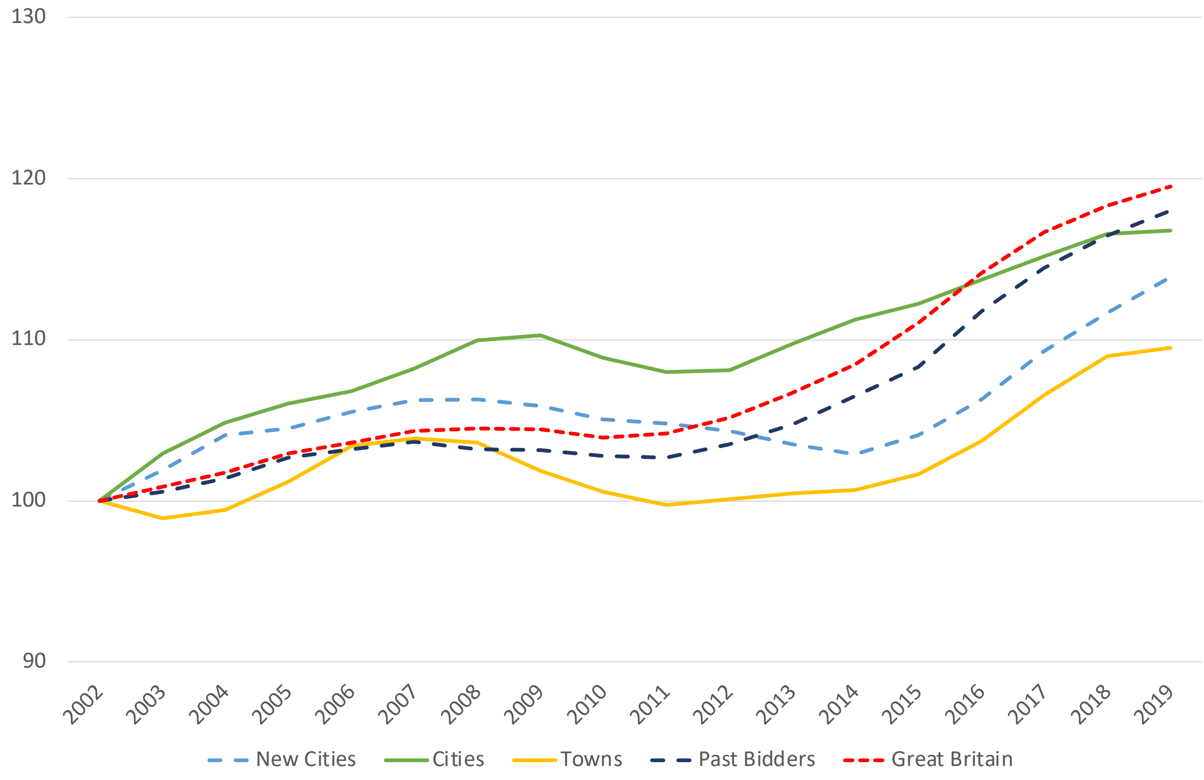
Source: ONS, Jobs density 2020

3.2.11 Overall, the group of ***towns*** did not experience high job growth over the period from 2000 to 2019. Four ***towns*** experienced a decline in the number of jobs at various points throughout the period, which is the highest number in any category.

Comparing the four groups

3.2.12 The average number of total jobs has increased in all categories over the period, albeit at varying rates. ***Cities*** and ***past bidders*** experienced an increase in jobs of approximately 18%, whilst ***new cities*** and ***towns*** saw a rise of 14% and 7%, respectively.

Figure 3.11: Grouped rolling average change in total jobs, Indexed to 2000



Source: ONS, Jobs Density 2020

3.2.13 Over the period there is a higher correlation of jobs growth between ***new cities*** and ***past bidders*** than ***new cities*** and ***cities***. This suggests that the award of city status has not significantly changed the number of jobs in ***new cities***.

3.2.14 Of all combinations of settlement types, the weakest correlation exists between ***cities*** and ***towns*** which is expected.

Figure 3.12: Correlation of Jobs Growth

	New cities	Cities	Towns	Past bidders
New cities	1.000			
Cities	0.821	1.000		
Towns	0.812	0.706	1.000	
Past bidders	0.856	0.864	0.842	1.000

Conclusion

3.2.15 In the years between 2002 and 2011, job growth in ***new cities*** exceeded national job growth, but by 2019 its growth in jobs was lower than both ***cities*** and ***past bidders***. This suggests that the award of city status is not a significant factor in the performance of an area with respect to jobs growth.

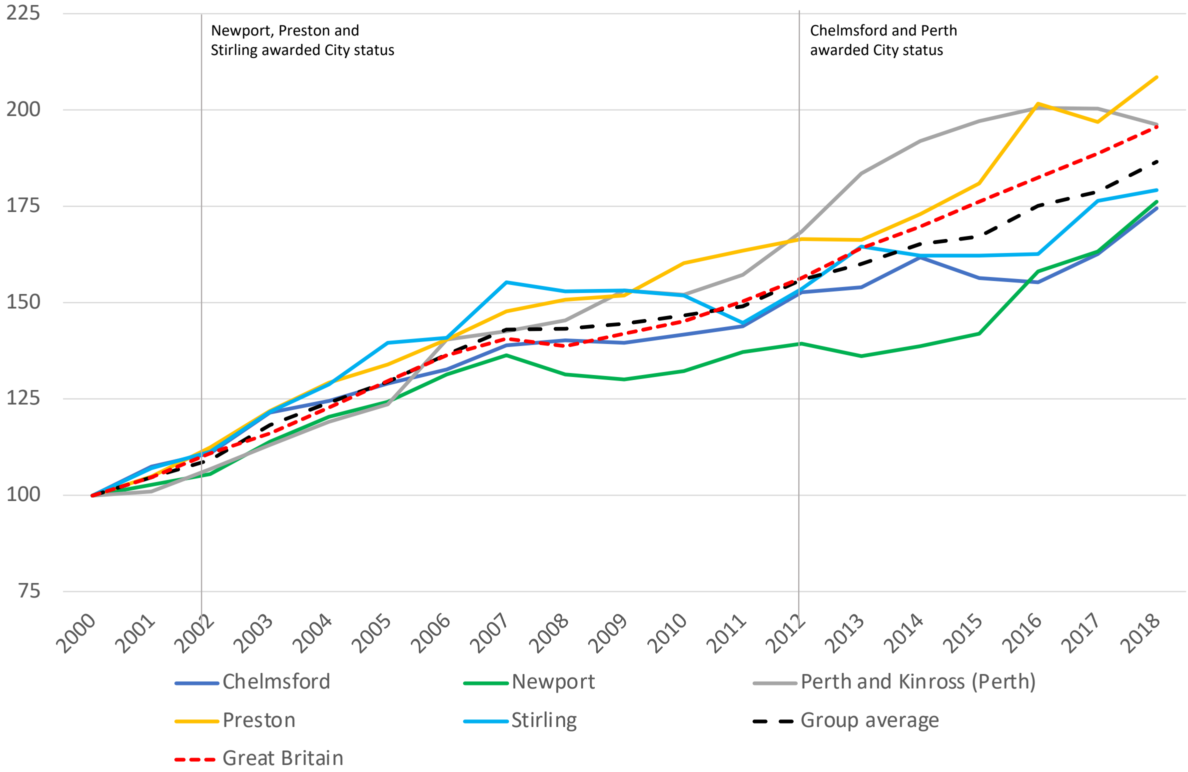
3.3 Gross Value Added

3.3.1 Gross Value Added (GVA) is a measure of the value added by businesses and individuals in the local economy (a simple definition is wages plus profits). Data is presented for the years from 2000 to 2018 in current base prices (which includes the effects of inflation) indexed to 2000.

New Cities

3.3.2 Within the group of ***new cities*** there is moderate variation in overall GVA growth over the period from 2000 to 2018, ranging from 76% in Newport to 108% in Preston. Only Perth and Preston experienced a greater overall rise in GVA than the national average.

Figure 3.13: New Cities Gross Value Added at Current Base Prices, Indexed to 2000



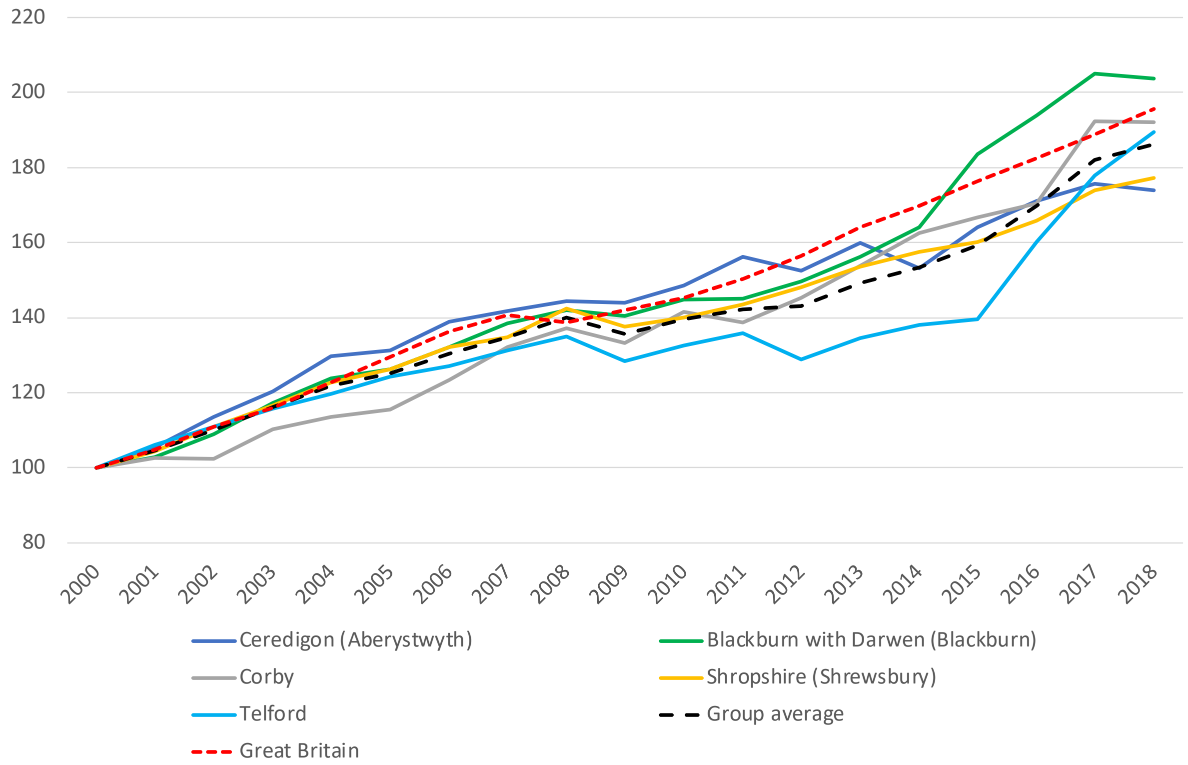
Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2021

3.3.3 No ***new cities*** saw a significant rise in their GVA following the award of city status in 2002. In 2012, Perth saw a rise in GVA, before it returned to the GB average. Chelmsford did not see the same rise in GVA after the award of city status. On average, new cities as a group grew just above the GB average until 2013 when they dropped below this benchmark.

Past bidders

3.3.4 Of all groups, ***past bidders*** had the narrowest variation in GVA growth rates, with 30 percentage points separating the highest grower, Blackburn, from the lowest, Aberystwyth. Blackburn was the only past bidder to experience higher overall GVA growth than the Great Britain average.

Figure 3.14: Past Bidders Gross Value Added at Current Base Prices, Indexed to 2000



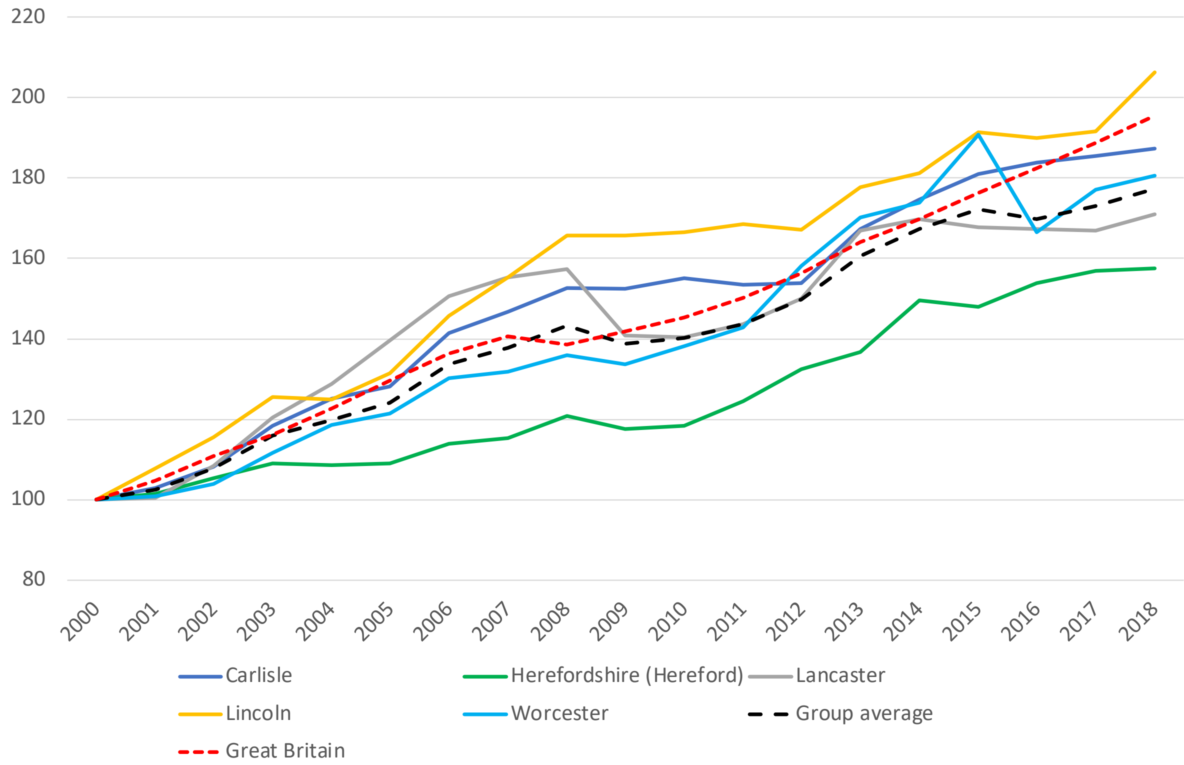
Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2021

3.3.5 The pattern of growth within the group of ***past bidders*** was relatively uniform throughout the period, with each experiencing peaks and troughs in similar years.

Cities

3.3.6 ***Cities*** have experienced variable GVA growth over the period. Lincoln experienced the largest overall growth in GVA (106%) whilst Hereford experienced the smallest (58%). Only Lincoln had consistently higher rates of GVA growth than Great Britain's average throughout the period, and the remaining four saw a lower GVA increase than the national average by 2018.

Figure 3.15: Cities Gross Value Added at Current Base Prices, Indexed to 2000



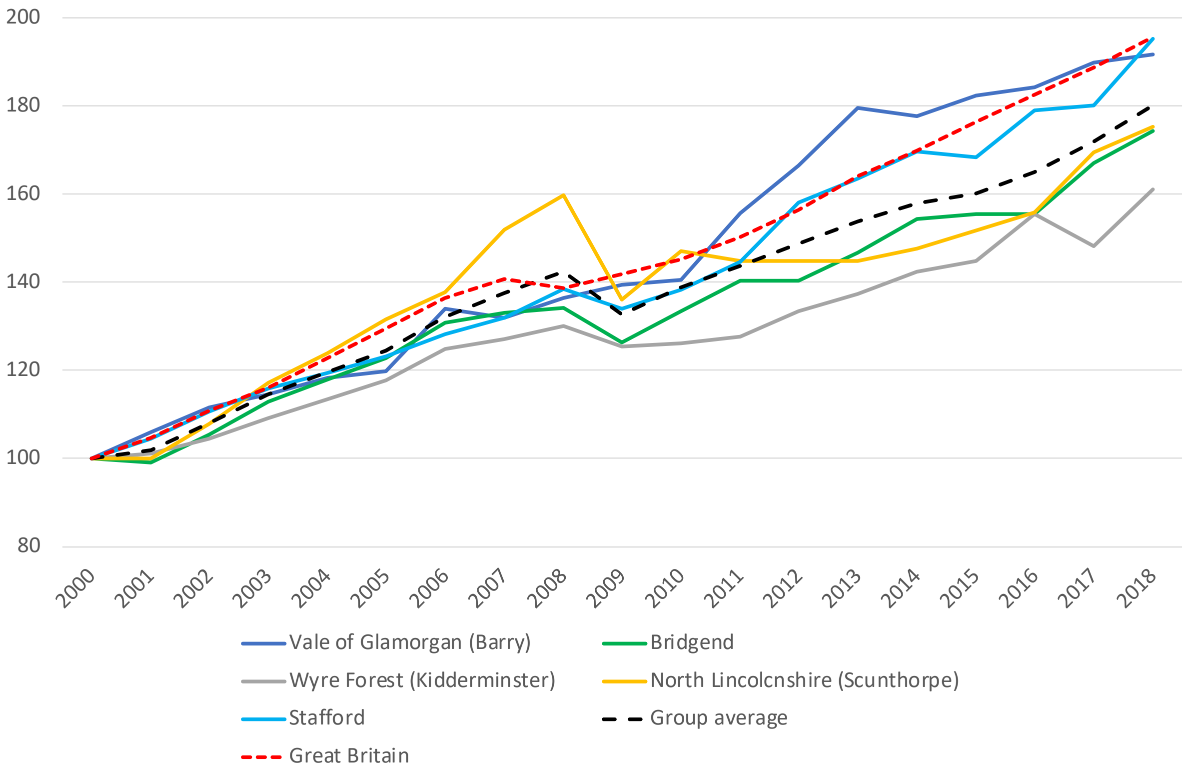
Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2021

3.3.7 The GVA growth rates follow different patterns of growth across the period. On average the trend across the ***cities*** group was in-line with the trend seen in GB until 2015 when the performance of Worcester brought the average down.

Towns

3.3.8 The ***towns*** followed a relatively similar pattern of growth until 2009 after which GVA increases diverged. By 2018, the greatest increase in GVA was experienced by Stafford (95%), whilst the lowest was seen by Kidderminster with a 61% increase in GVA from 2000.

Figure 3.16: Towns Gross Value Added at Current Base Prices, Indexed to 2000



Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2021

3.3.9 By the end of the 20 year period, all ***towns*** had experienced a lower overall rate of growth than the national average. Two of the five settlements experienced short periods of growth that exceeded the national average, but generally the group's GVA growth was below the average for Great Britain throughout.

Comparing the four groups

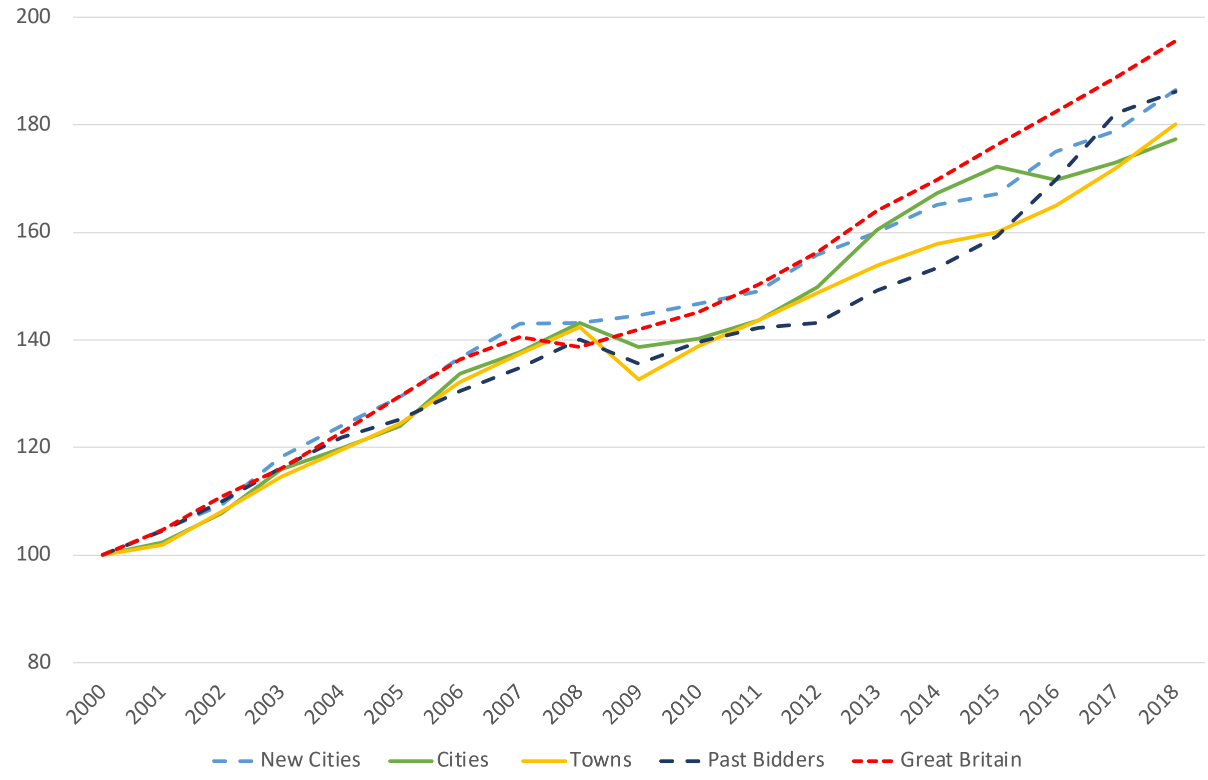
3.3.10 Over the period 2000 to 2018, each group's average GVA followed a similar upward trend. Each group has experienced an increase in GVA of over 75% on the 2000 figure. However, since 2012 the rise in average GVA for each group has remained below the national average increase. The group with the highest average GVA growth were ***new cities*** and the lowest rise was experienced by the ***cities***.

3.3.11 There is a very strong correlation between the GVA increase across each group, which is unsurprising given their near parallel upward trends. This confirms that all types of settlement have experienced similar increases in GVA throughout the period.

Figure 3.17: Correlation of Annual GVA Change

	New cities	Cities	Towns	Past bidders
New cities	1.000			
Cities	0.990	1.000		
Towns	0.995	0.990	1.000	
Past bidders	0.984	0.968	0.987	1.000

Figure 3.18: Grouped average Gross Value Added at Current Base Prices Indexed to 2000



Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry 2021

Conclusion

3.3.12 Between 2000 and 2018 GVA increased in all four of the groups, with a high correlation between them. None exceeded the overall rate of growth in Great Britain. Despite varying annual changes over the period, ***past bidders*** and ***new cities*** ended up with almost the same overall levels of growth over the full period, and this was higher than for ***cities*** and ***towns***.