

WELCOME

A year of opportunity for the Midlands Engine

Welcome to our new look Newsletter - Midlands Matters - in which we bring you the latest news, views and achievements from our region. We achieved a great deal in 2019, and 2020 will be an extremely important year for our partnership - a time of change and opportunity. I look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

We began 2020 with a new Government, and the first priority of the Midlands Engine has been to start working closely with this Government. One of its first acts was to confirm our departure from the EU on 31 January, and after the Prime Minister got Brexit done, we now need to work with him to make Brexit work.

One of the year's first announcements was that the Government will press ahead with HS2, which will bring huge benefits to our communities in the East and West Midlands. It is time to come together to deliver the infrastructure revolution the region desperately needs.

It was with bitter disappointment that we have

Meanwhile, closer to home, I'm delighted to share with you that initial conversations have begun around the concept of the very first Midlands Engine Environmental Strategy, with discussions across four major UK environmental NGOs - the Woodland Trust, National Trust, RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts - who have highlighted the challenges and opportunities ahead. I look forward to working with colleagues from right across our partnership as this early thinking evolves in coming months.

2020 will, without doubt, be a year of much change and many opportunities. I'm committed to ensuring that together, throughout the year, we take every opportunity to promote and celebrate our work through partnership both across the UK and internationally - and take ever-more-aligned steps together to grow the wealth and prosperity of communities throughout the Midlands Engine.

My best wishes for the year ahead.

Sir John Peace, Midlands Engine Chairman

had to postpone the Fifth UK-China Regional Leaders Summit. We worked closely with our friends and partners in China to make this tough decision together and our thoughts remain with them at this time. When the moment is right, we will plan and deliver the spectacular event we all worked so hard towards. My thanks to every single one of you who contributed so much in the planning, and for your tremendous support as we announced the decision to postpone.

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INVESTING IN TRANSPORT FOR GROWTH



NOW WE HAVE CERTAINTY ON HS2, IT MUST DELIVER FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MIDLANDS

Sir John Peace: "The Midlands has a golden opportunity to make the most of the huge benefits HS2 will bring to our communities. It is time to come together to deliver the infrastructure revolution the region desperately needs." The image is a new artist's impression of HS2 Interchange station near Solihull, providing high speed connectivity for Birmingham Airport, the NEC and Birmingham Business Park.

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TRADING WITH THE WORLD

COUNTDOWN TO MIPIM

2020

In early February, the Leaders of the MIPIM 2020 Midlands Delegation joined together in Birmingham to look forward to the event, and were addressed by Sir John Peace, Chairman of the Midlands Engine and Leader of the Midlands Delegation, and Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands. Both spoke about the range and scale of opportunities on show at MIPIM 2020, and highlighted why the time is right to go out and promote infrastructure investment and real estate development across the Midlands, both East and West.

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ACCELERATING INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE



WATCH THIS SPACE...

Space Park, Leicester, is now under construction - bringing academia and industry together to create an end-to-end satellite design, manufacture and data processing facility. The potential for the local economy and the Midlands Engine is massive, driving growth and creating thousands of jobs.

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DATA DRIVING REGIONAL GROWTH

Last month, a key event brought together academics from universities from across the Midlands Engine partnership to focus on filling knowledge gaps in available regional data and evidence. The aim was to establish collaboration opportunities to fill gaps, grow data available to our partners and define research programmes which will underpin policy and decision making as we work to grow our regional economy.

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CHAMPIONING APPRENTICESHIPS

Sir John Peace championed the opportunity for the Midlands to be in the vanguard of apprenticeship provision thanks to our high-skills sectors when he gave the keynote speech at the first Apprenticeships Conference, which was organised by Nottingham Trent University to coincide with National Apprenticeships Week.

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AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF OUR REGION

MIDLANDS ENGINE: QUARTERLY ECONOMIC COMMENTARY

Promising indicators from our January 2020 Quarterly Economic Commentary for the Midlands Engine, and the underpinning data, show our region growing GVA in total and per employee faster than the UK as a whole between 2017-2018.

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INCREASED FLEXIBILITY FOR STUDENTS

Students wishing to transfer or pause and resume their studies can now transfer their credits, thanks to the Midlands Credit Compass scheme.

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SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH IN OUR REGION'S WORKPLACES

The Midlands Engine Mental Health and Productivity Pilot grows from strength to strength, working with an extensive group of dedicated partners from right across the region. The programmes aim is to support mental health issues in the workplace, boosting productivity.



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SMART PLACES POWERING AN ULTRA-CONNECTED REGION



ERA BUILDS NEW ENERGY PARTNERSHIPS WITH ZHEJIANG

Representatives from the Energy Research Accelerator (ERA) have forged new and exciting connections in China, meeting with members of the Zhejiang Provincial Science and Technology Department and Chinese government officials, to establish new collaboration opportunities in renewable and low-carbon energy.

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The Midlands Engine is a coalition of Councils, Combined Authorities, Local

Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), Universities and businesses across the region, actively working with Government to build a collective identity, to enable us to present the Midlands as a competitive and compelling offer that is attractive at home and overseas.

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