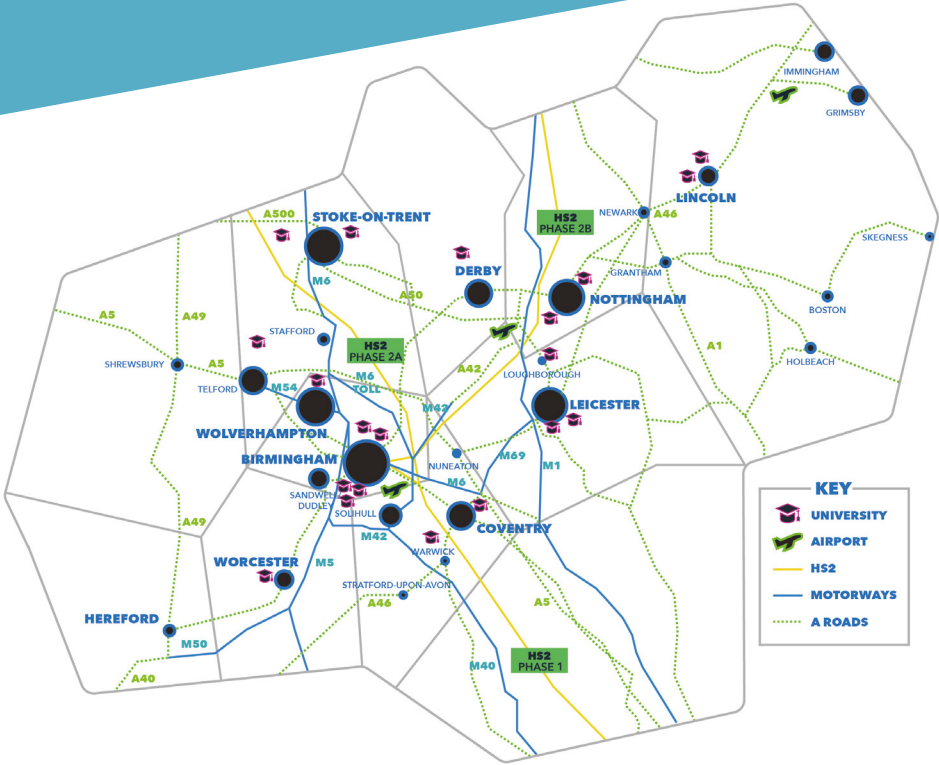


MIDLANDS ENGINE

MIDLANDS MATTERS ISSUE 4

midlandsengine.org



WELCOME to Issue 4 of Midlands Matters, our Partnership newsletter.

Last month, I wrote to you as the impact of Covid-19 was beginning to be felt across the Midlands and throughout the UK. In the intervening weeks, our region is facing up to enormous and unpredictable challenges in the wake of the pandemic - as individuals; as families; as organisations; and as a community. The only sure way forward is a joined-up, collective response to meet the short-term challenges and take the important decisions ahead together, in partnership, as we plan for rebooting the Midlands economy.

Our work together is a powerful unifying force; our shared endeavour as public and private sector partners can and will enable the most effective response.

Meaningful action across our Partnership requires solid data to inform good decisions. And so I am pleased to announce that our Midlands Engine Economic Observatory has now completed the very first Midlands Engine Independent Economic Review.

Its publication follows a year of detailed analysis with leading economists and academics, together with in-depth-insight from over 50 of our region's businesses. It is a powerful resource for Government, policy-makers, investors and wider stakeholders; providing a body of evidence that supports the growing policy agenda of 'levelling up' ambitions across the UK.

The IER and subsequent work undertaken by the Observatory is a key illustration of the Midlands Engine Partnership working together to address the challenges that our region faces, not least our response to COVID-19, and to act on the many opportunities that lie ahead to unlock the full potential of our region.

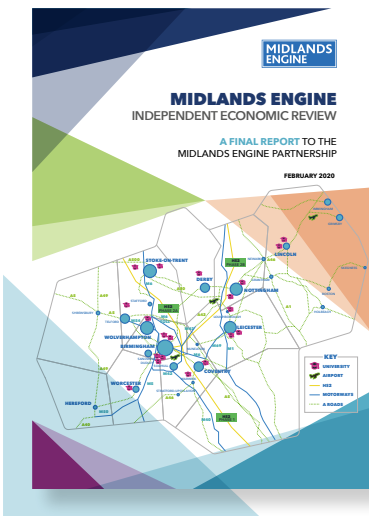
This joined-up, collective response was ably demonstrated at the virtual roundtable I hosted this week with over 30 regional leaders and the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Simon Clarke MP. A really constructive meeting, sharing experience and expertise from across the region.

Also in this newsletter, we are pleased once again to showcase the many ways universities and businesses in the Midlands Engine are responding to the coronavirus crisis, with compassion, commitment and huge ingenuity.

With my best wishes,
Sir John Peace, Chairman, Midlands Engine



AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF OUR REGION



Launch of the Midlands Engine first Independent Economic Review

An Independent Economic Review (IER) for the Midlands has been developed by the team at the Midlands Engine Economic Observatory, to provide in-depth insights into the drivers, barriers and opportunities for growth and prosperity in the Midlands. The IER investigates the size and nature of the productivity gap between the Midlands and the rest of the UK. It also considers the opportunities presented by a Midlands-wide approach to address challenges and drive forward growth.

[Download](#)

Download the full Midlands Engine Independent Economic Review and supporting evidence

Midlands Engine convenes Covid-19 response meeting of regional leaders and Minister of State



On 28th April, Midlands Engine convened a virtual meeting, chaired by Sir John Peace, of over 30 regional leaders and the Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Simon Clarke MP. The conversation focused on the shared response to short-term challenges faced by the region as well as the longer-term challenge of rebooting the Midlands economy in the wake of COVID-19.

[READ MORE](#)



Jonathan Gullis, MP

Championing the Midlands through virtual meetings

We are continuing to raise the profile of the Midlands in virtual form and have recently met with Theo Clarke, MP for Stafford, Jonathan Gullis, MP for Stoke-on-Trent North, and Tom Randall, MP for Gedling. Jonathan is developing plans for 'Silicon Stoke' to position the city at the heart of the tech revolution and bring high skilled and high wage jobs to the area, and has shared early planning and thoughts for next steps with Midlands Engine as he develops and drives forward this agenda.

TRADING WITH THE WORLD

Fusion opening event in September

Nottingham City Council, Hangzhou government and the Creative Quarter opened Fusion, the Hangzhou-Nottingham Cultural & Creative Industry Exchange Centre in Sneinton Market Avenues, in May 2018. It reopened earlier this year after a short period of closure and a series of cultural events, including artist exhibitions and traditional Chinese festival celebrations, is now being organised.

[READ MORE](#)



INVESTING IN TRANSPORT FOR GROWTH



HS2 uncovers world's oldest railway roundhouse at Birmingham archaeological site

Excavation work by HS2 Ltd has unearthed what is thought to be the world's oldest railway roundhouse at the construction site of its Birmingham Curzon Street station.

The roundhouse was situated adjacent to the old Curzon Street station, which was the first railway terminus serving the centre of Birmingham and built during a period of great significance and growth for the city. Built to a design by the 19th century engineer Robert Stephenson, it was operational on 12 November 1837, meaning the recently discovered building may even predate the current titleholder of 'world's oldest' in Derby by almost two years.

[READ MORE](#)

Government approval to issue Notice to Proceed on HS2

The Department for Transport has given approval for HS2 Ltd to issue Notice to Proceed to the four Main Works Civils Contractors working on the project - SCS Railways, Align JV, EKFB JV, and BBV JV - to commence full detailed design and construction of Phase One of Britain's new high-speed railway.

[READ MORE](#)



ACCELERATING INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE

Queen's Awards for Midlands organisations



Congratulations to two Midlands organisations who have received a prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise: Innovation 2020. Nottingham-based international business messaging company Esendex won the Award for its Mobile Collections solution; an innovative way of helping businesses recoup debt while at the same time engaging sensitively with the debtor and working with them to help control their finances. Meanwhile, the Award for Marketing Derby reflects the organisation's groundbreaking business model and success as the inward investment promotion agency for the city of Derby and county of Derbyshire.

[READ MORE](#)

Universities working at the forefront in the fight against COVID-19

With the coronavirus crisis ongoing, many Midlands universities are continuing their remarkable work to offer support, taking a proactive approach to new innovations, product development and research.

[READ MORE](#)



Businesses rising to the challenge of tackling coronavirus



Organisations from right across the Midlands region have been coming to the fore, going to amazing lengths to support efforts to combat coronavirus. Businesses are leading in areas as diverse as diagnostics and treatments, clinical trials and PPE to support our region and country in delivering rapid responses to the challenges of Covid-19.

[READ MORE](#)

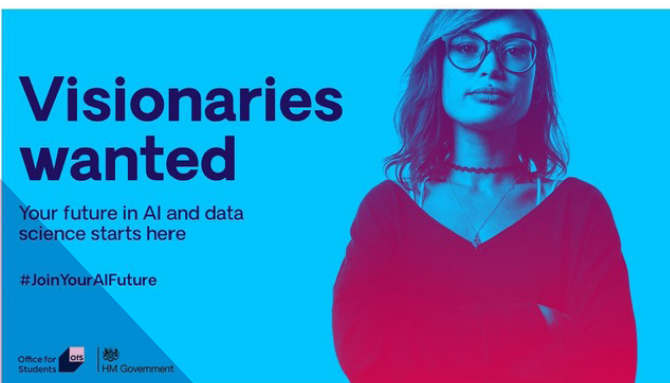
Thrive at Home launched in response to COVID-19

The Midlands Engine funded Mental Health and Productivity Pilot team has worked with the West Midlands Combined Authority to create Thrive at Home, a suite of fantastic resources for employers and employees. These help overcome the challenges of remote working, which has of course increased massively as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. It provides toolkit-style resources to look after mental health, musculoskeletal health and lifestyles, as well as dealing with the impact of changed working and communications styles and changes to finance, home situations and caring responsibilities.



[READ MORE](#)

Funding awarded to Keele University to develop AI and data science course



A substantial funding award has been made to Keele University from the Office for Students (OfS) to develop a graduate conversion course specialising in artificial intelligence (AI) and data science, one of only 18 UK universities to do so.

[READ MORE](#)

Midlands Innovation universities supporting local communities



Staff and students from universities across the Midlands Innovation University partnership are doing all they can to support the fight against COVID-19. Midlands Innovation partners are working with the NHS, Government and local communities at this time of crisis, drawing on their people, resources and expertise to provide help to those in need.

[READ MORE](#)

Joint project announced to fund digital artworks

A joint project launched by the University of Warwick and Coventry University will fund local artists working with researchers. Together, they plan to create digital artworks to be showcased this summer in a special digital exhibition in conjunction with the Coventry City of Culture Trust. After the exhibition, they will be kept in the Coventry City of Culture Digital Archive.



[READ MORE](#)

The UK's largest programme on higher education technicians begins



A new project which could become the blueprint for the career advancement of 30,000 higher education technicians is now officially underway. The innovative new UK-first programme is being delivered by Midlands Engine partner Midlands Innovation, a partnership of eight universities - Aston, Birmingham, Cranfield, Keele, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham and Warwick - and is being backed by national bodies and key industry leaders.

[READ MORE](#)



[TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER CLICK HERE](#)



[TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NEWSLETTER CLICK HERE](#)



[FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA](#)

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. Copyright ©2020 The Midlands Engine, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is: Midlands Engine, Trent Bridge House, Fox Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 6BJ

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

Every effort is made to provide accurate and complete information in the Midlands Engine newsletter. However, Midlands Engine cannot guarantee that there will be no errors and makes no claims, promises or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness of the contents of its newsletter and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in the contents of this newsletter.