



**MIDLANDS
ENGINE**

OBSERVATORY ACTION PLAN

APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2025

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THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP



Sarah Middleton as Chair of Midlands Engine Observatory Programme Board

This Action Plan sets out the Midlands Engine Observatory's collective plan to support our region through data, research, and insight.

We would like to thank all our partners from across our region for contributing their valuable time and immense expertise. Together, we have set out how we can drive action towards creating informed policy, new knowledge, and capitalise on the region's wealth of academic and policy expertise to support the economic growth and recovery of the Midlands Engine.

We have developed this plan with our partners, making shared decisions and commitments. We will continue to work together with purpose. The Observatory is a powerful partnership with the ability to harness our region-wide strengths and expertise as we work towards a successful future.

It is also a core part of the work of the Midlands Engine, where it provides essential insight and information to support all areas of delivery. By tracking the impact of the interventions made across the region, the Observatory allows us to quantify our impact.

With the release of the Levelling Up White Paper, metrics have become even more important. As the only pan-regional observatory in the UK, the Observatory can support the government's Levelling Up agenda and continue to advocate for further investment into areas with the most need.

The power of the Observatory lies in the breadth and depth of its partnership. Working together, we can support an understanding of the economic growth and need of our region.



Professor Delma Dwight, Director, Midlands Engine Observatory

The Action Plan gives us goals and direction as a partnership. As we work towards delivering the Levelling Up agenda, having reliable metrics and insight becomes more important.

The plan has the partnership of the Midlands Engine Observatory at its core. An initial call to our partners for their perceived research needs elicited responses from businesses, regional sectoral alliances, universities, and local authorities. These initial ideas were summarised into broad thematic areas to support the generation of ideas at workshop sessions.

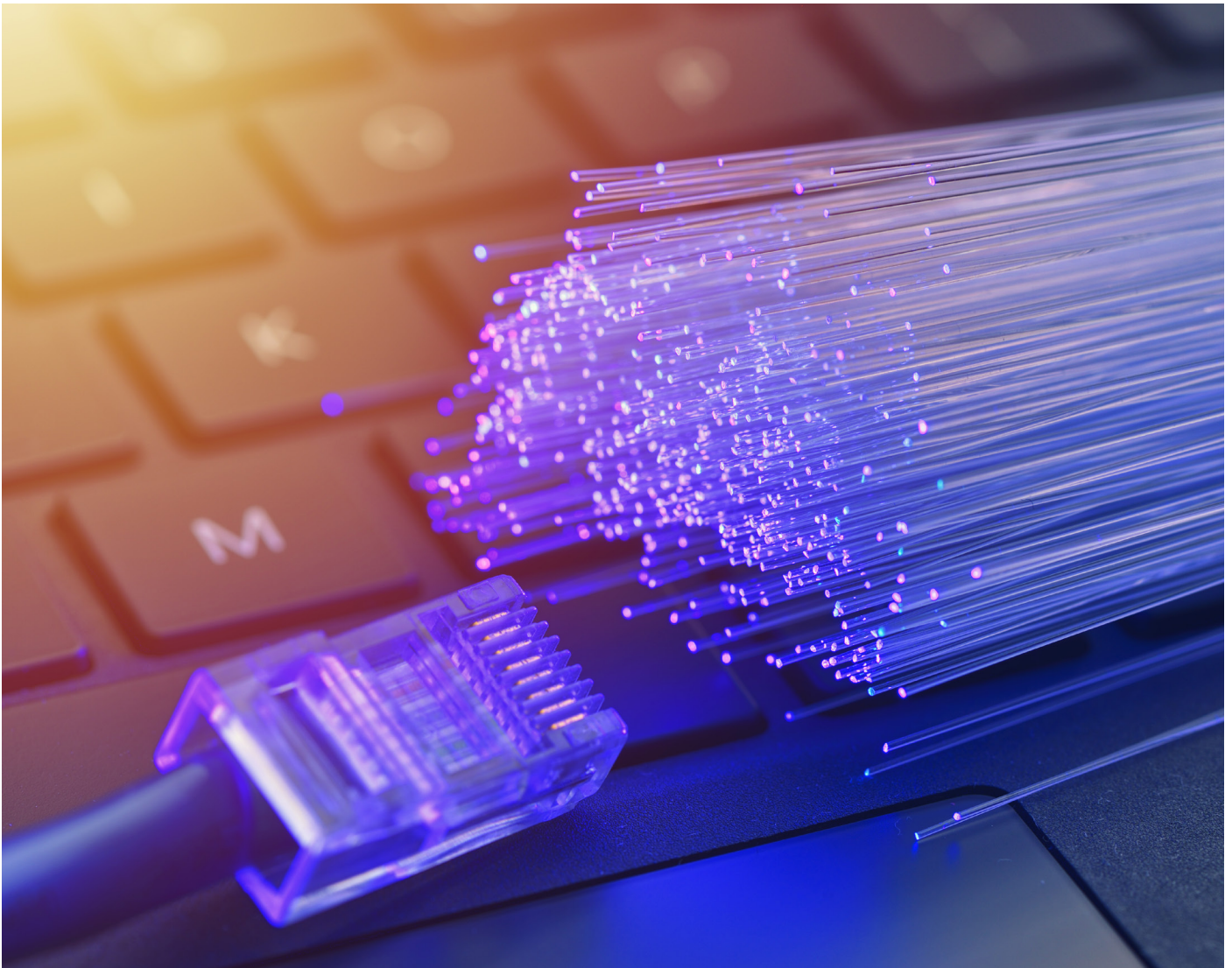
Workshop sessions with our university partners through the Research Partnership, and our Local Authority and LEP partners through the Intelligence Community, enabled us to further explore possible research topics and finalise topic areas. These include health & productivity, green growth & green skills, supply chains & sectors, clusters & internationalisation, and digital skills. Our partners' ideas were combined to create core ideas through discussions captured live on online boards. From these ideas, we will develop discrete research projects.

We will work collaboratively with our partners to develop and deliver these research projects, while always responding to the changing needs of the region over the next three years. The Observatory partnership allows us to meet these needs and expand both our collaborative work and the capacity of our partners to support research and insight work.

Our partners across the Midlands are already leading in regional data collection and Research Partnership. We will continue to lead by remaining ambitious and planning collaborative actions. In co-developing the research programme, we show the commitment across the partnership to continue to act together for the good of our region.

THE ROLE OF THE MIDLANDS ENGINE OBSERVATORY IS TO:

- ✓ Highlight and advocate for our region's key role in driving the UK's recovery
- ✓ Be a strong convening force across our region and an ambassador for our collective work
- ✓ Provide an evidence and intelligence base to underpin activity
- ✓ Engage with policy makers on behalf of the region to influence and shape policies which bring benefits for every part of our region
- ✓ Work in partnership to identify together the most effective routes for action as we mobilise for implementation, leveraging the capabilities and knowledge of every part of our Partnership
- ✓ Publicise and celebrate the remarkable strengths of partners across the region, raising the profile and building awareness of the immense capabilities of our region - across the UK and internationally



OBSERVATORY STRENGTH IN PARTNERSHIP

Professor Simon Collinson,
Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor,
University of Birmingham, Director
WM REDI and City-REDI



The Midlands Engine Observatory is a valuable regional resource. The breadth of data allows us to set the performance of the Midlands in a wider regional and national context. Having data at our fingertips helps us make effective bids and calls for investment, as we can understand our areas of need and opportunities. It allows us to effectively lobby for funds and changes that directly support those who need it most.

Working collaboratively with partners such as City-REDI, we can track the real-time impact of economic crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding how the pandemic was affecting our region through COVID monitors allowed us to better tailor support to the areas and groups in need. City-REDI is looking forward to continuing to work with the Observatory and its partners for the economic growth and recovery of the Midlands region.

**Professor Nigel Driffield, Deputy
Pro Vice Chancellor, University of
Warwick and Executive Team of
Productivity Institute**



Productivity has been a longstanding economic and political puzzle. Working collaboratively with the Midlands Engine Observatory and its partners across the Research Partnership and Intelligence Community, we are able to draw together a range of data, research, and expertise to better understand how the region experiences the productivity gap. This has enabled us to inform government decision making through responding to Calls for Evidence and producing well-evidenced papers.

The range of expertise across the partnership is what makes the Midlands Engine Observatory successful. By drawing on evidence from local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), and academics, we are able to understand a range of perspectives on our region, and the nuances of place. This allows us to support place-based approaches to regional or national issues.

**Professor Samir Dani, Chair of
Research Partnership, Deputy
Director of Keele Business School**



The Midlands Engine Observatory allows academics from across the region to collaborate effectively. Through Research Partnership forums, researchers can share findings and opportunities with others. As we move forward, the partnership will allow universities to better improve their research capacity through shared projects, train more researchers by supporting graduate students, and enable joint bids for research funding.

Being able to contribute to innovative research that supports the growth of the region is important for academics and universities. Universities are not separate from their local towns and cities, but intimately connected to them. Supporting growing understanding of the challenges faced by the Midlands and solutions is part of the role of the Research Partnership.

Sir John Peace,
Chair of Midlands Engine



The work of the Midlands Engine Observatory is exemplary. As the UK's only pan-regional Observatory, it provides unparalleled insight into the economic growth and challenges within the Midlands. By providing statistics for all of the Midlands Engine areas of activity, the Observatory supports improved health, increased digital connectivity, international investment, and the green growth agenda. We can track the impact of our interventions, show how we achieve good value for money, and highlight shortfalls in the current support for our region.

The pandemic and the effects of the EU Exit will be felt for many years to come. The Midlands Engine region has been tested more than any other region in the UK. This reflects the industrial and demographic mix of our region - with some local economies among the most vulnerable in the UK in terms of their sectoral composition and health vulnerability.

Observatory reports, such as the State of the Region Report, show in granular detail the damage inflicted across our economy by these challenges and the impact on our communities, who are the beating heart of the Midlands Engine. But as our region has proved time and time again - through our collaborative approach to innovation and by adapting in a positive way to meet new challenges - we are not just resilient but capable of prospering in even the harshest environments.

OUR PARTNERS

We have a wide range of partners who are part of the Midlands Engine Observatory





SUMMARY WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2023

This table outlines the Midlands Engine Observatory's objectives and activities.

The Midlands Engine Observatory work programme will be flexible, adapting to the changing requirements of the Partnership. It will be updated regularly to reflect priorities.

Theme:	Actions:
2.1: Over-arching	
Maximising University connections - leveraging and capitalising on opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplifying and disseminating of Midlands Engine university research to maximise the impact from the research • Collation & promotion of regular Policy Pieces from the Research Partnership • Supporting internships, graduates and student placements
Government Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop active working relationships with the Levelling Up Unit and the new National Data Spatial Unit
Policy Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop active working relationships with leading think tanks such as What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth. To include collaborative research and reports
Real Time data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and commission a data exploration project, utilising new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to access new data insights
Funding Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the ongoing change and impact of changing funding on the business base
Theme Support:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Thematic Scorecards to track and monitor progress and core metrics including Levelling Up Factsheets and Dashboards across all Missions • Produce factsheets across all thematic areas to support MPs and partners with access to latest Midlands Engine intelligence and insights • Support the publication and distribution of reports • Develop policy and influencing activities for government, as well as relaying information into government
Flexible Research Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside planned activity and in order to stay agile to the requirements of the partnership throughout the year, research budget will be retained to have the ability to respond to emerging priorities
2.2 The Midlands Macro-Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Monthly Economic Impact Monitoring reports and publish them on the Midlands Engine website • Further development of the Midlands Engine Intelligence Hub • Deliver a minimum of two Deep Dive Reports every year • Run four Quarterly Economic Briefings on relevant topics each year • Deliver an annual State of the Region Report to be published on the Midlands Engine website • Develop and analyse the Levelling Up Missions & Metrics to capture and report on regional progress for Midlands Engine • Develop and use the Oxford Economics Economic Forecast Model to support and measure the economic growth of the region • Develop and update Scorecards to support other Midlands Engine themes, delivering reports on changes in thematic areas
2.3 Sectors & Supply Chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to collaborate with other supply chain research taking place across the region including the work of the Productivity Institute

Theme:	Actions:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with Midlands Aerospace Alliance and MAKE UK and other relevant sector bodies to deliver research pieces including identifying the challenges faced by clusters in the region, how these differ by location or sector and what solutions may be needed
2.4 Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Midlands Engine Health and other partners to identify the areas of greatest need to design and commission research to support them • Measure, where possible, the economic impact and determinants of ill health – mental and physical, including the impact on productivity • Advance research into the sector and supporting supply chains
2.5 Green Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to partners delivering the Ten Point Plan to identify areas of need, and develop and deliver research to fill the identified knowledge gaps • Continue to develop and enhance the suite of digital tools to study the green growth agenda including the Green Growth Storymap and Natural Capital Monitor to inform decision making and policy • Undertake research to understand the green skills needed in the future focusing on the sector skill profile, a definition of green skills, and deep dives into specific industries • Develop methodologies on the impact of interventions on economic, social and environmental outcomes to help measure these impacts, including regional and Levelling Up • Understand the value of the region's natural capital and identify where public money and private investment can be made in nature-based solutions to deliver public goods, supply chain resilience, flood risk reduction and a suite of ecosystem services as metrics for financial and non-financial return on investment
2.6 Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what digital skills are lacking amongst the workforce both now and in the future and building on the digital skills partnerships • Identify potential digital growth areas, such as digital businesses and digital clusters. Identify barriers to growth and success, and what is needed to support them. This may be related to the clusters research • Understand the impact of COVID-19 on digital poverty and digital uptake, and the role of digital as recovery continues
2.7 Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in Partnership with Midlands Connect
2.8 Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the Midlands Investment Portfolio via high-quality data, digital and marketing assets • Develop a functional evidence-base for internationalisation, including thought-leadership report and analysis to identify the Midlands' sectoral clusters of the future • Understand the impact of investments in local prosperity and jobs, especially in relation to Levelling Up, and how the impact of investment in localities can be improved • Track the levels of investment into the region in comparison to other regional and national figures
2.9 Midlands Engine Labour Market Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly monitoring and reporting on key Midlands Engine Labour Market Intelligence through updates to the Midlands Engine Intelligence Hub and Regional Economic Impact Monitors
2.10 Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually engage in horizon-scanning activities including engaging with universities, researchers and think tanks to understand the latest thought and advancements across our priority areas

1. INTRODUCTION

The Midlands Engine partnership has bold ambitions for our region. We believe that such ambitions demand sound foundations, so we are committed to **growing our regional evidence base, providing accessible, up-to-date intelligence** for regional partners, businesses, and government, and sharing insights on regional economic performance. The Partnership has invested in dedicated capacity to develop regional intelligence and interactive mapping capabilities to grow the regional evidence base for prioritising and targeting interventions which drive recovery and economic growth.

The Midlands Engine Observatory gathers data and intelligence, shapes policy insights and helps target investment for recovery and growth in our region. It is the **only pan-regional Observatory in England**. The Midlands Engine Observatory is an **alliance of leading academic researchers and economic and industry experts** working together to deliver the regionally focused research and analysis our partners need in every part of the Midlands.








deliver through the Midlands Engine Partnership. National datasets can be valuable - the UK picture of economic performance and social impacts indicates trajectories. But our Partnership recognised the need to go further and understand the regional picture regarding the economy and communities of the Midlands Engine. To achieve this goal, we set up our **Observatory** in 2018.

Early work carried out by our Observatory included an **Independent Economic Review (IER)** - the first of its type for our region. This huge undertaking drew on over 300 evidence sources and included the commissioning of dozens of individual study areas to address gaps in regional knowledge. The review is the result of a year-long detailed analysis of the whole Midlands economy, delivered by leading economists and academics together with in-depth insight from many regional businesses.

Published in April 2020, the resulting body of work has set the focus and tempo for initial work delivered through our Partnership. These priorities remain in focus today - as set out in this document. The Midlands Engine Observatory is building on the work of our IER which highlighted stubborn, structural barriers to overcome if our regional economy is to thrive:

BACKGROUND

Contemporary evidence of the challenges across our economy, the issues facing our businesses and the experiences of our communities underpins the work we

BARRIER	INTERVENTION RATIONALE	WHAT IS NEEDED	OUR IMPACT
GVA Gap	Closing the GVA gap is worth £76bn per annum to the UK economy	Levelling Up to create conditions for growth and enhanced productivity	Increased GVA 
Low Skills Levels	Businesses need a skilled workforce to drive the growth and productivity	Targeted investment to deliver skills Midlands businesses need	A growing skilled workforce 
Lack of Infrastructure Investment	Decades of under-investment in transport, low levels of digital connectivity, fragile energy infrastructure	Rapid investment in transport, digital and energy/green growth infrastructure	Connectivity driving growth 
Poor Access to Finance	Poor access to growth and innovation finance, business loans and high value capital investment difficult	Expanded, tailored financial tools for Midlands businesses	Businesses and jobs growth 
Low Public Sector R&D Investment	Under performance in R&D intensity - lowest UK public sector investment in R&D per head	Increased and targeted R&D spend linked to Midlands sector and academic opportunities	Innovation-led growth 
Impact of Brexit	The Midlands has been hit the hardest by Brexit out of all English regions as an exporting powerhouse with strong EU trade	Resources and support to grow number of firms trading internationally	International trade growth 
Impact of COVID-19	Midlands most affected by COVID-19 as advanced manufacturing, tourism and retail sectors hardest hit	Targeted support for most impacted sectors, skills transition, resources for business growth	Vibrant sectors, high-value jobs 

The IER is a powerful resource giving partners, government, policy makers, investors, and wider stakeholders the informational tools to address the challenges and drive the Midlands Engine's growth agenda. It also provides a framework within which we can direct future research and address gaps in knowledge within our region and its economy.

We will continue to build on the results of the IER to support the economic recovery of the region. The Midlands is the only region in England to have a pan-regional Observatory. It works to gather data, create intelligence, shape policy insights, and help target investments for recovery and growth in every part of

our region. It ensures we are evidence led, creating policy and activity based on regional data and bespoke regional research. **Ultimately, it delivers data-led analysis, helping in turn to drive tailored regional investment decisions and outcomes.**

Our Observatory works to continue to grow and deepen the evidence base available to government and partners to enable understanding of the issues impacting the Midlands' economy. Daily intelligence briefings provide **real-time intelligence and inform contemporary decision making**, for instance through roundtables and strategic debates.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

'Just to add my thanks to you and the Observatory team for your ongoing support. We've had more positive engagement with the UK Atomic Energy Authority and the regional team is such a key asset in our pitch to host STEP.'

Adrian Smith, Deputy Chief Executive & Corporate Director of Place, Nottinghamshire County Council

Our Partnership across local authorities, universities, businesses and more allows us to access expertise and data from the entire region. An integrated part of the Midlands Engine Partnership, the Observatory comprises a **Research Partnership** of academic institutions to deliver the regional evidence, insights, and analysis our partners and government need.

Our Observatory also brings together the **Midlands Engine Intelligence Community**, data owners and those interested in economic and wider data to share and disseminate latest intelligence and identify shared research opportunities. Together, the Observatory Research Partnership and Intelligence Community provide a forum for universities and partners to steer research, collaborate on projects, and secure external research projects. The Observatory's focus is to create impact through policy and strategy, both of which require the invaluable evidence provided by our partners.

The breadth and expertise of our Partnership is one of our strengths. The Observatory works to promote and disseminate the work of our region, and to coordinate, **gap fill and commission research of value** to partners and stakeholders. In 2021, the Observatory secured £500,000 of co-investment from universities and other research partners against 10 areas of primary research which were identified within the Independent Economic Review in 2019.

Our work continues to be underpinned by contemporary data and emerging evidence. As the role of our Observatory grows in breadth and significance, it is a critical driver in the evidence-led, pan-regional work we undertake together.

As we work together to overcome barriers, the **Midlands Engine Observatory is developing a programme of in-depth research projects - ensuring that the Midlands Engine Partnership is fully informed by a growing, robust evidence base.** The results of these studies will help us target our work and carefully inform and shape policies while supporting partners in directing their efforts to areas most in need. The Partnership sets the priorities for the Observatory work programme in line with the Midlands Engine Priorities. The following pages set out the **nine areas of focus with activity underway to further deepen our knowledge of the economy.**

The supporting work programme of the Midlands Engine Observatory will be **flexible**, adapting to the changing requirements of the partnership and this action plan will be updated regularly to reflect priorities. The Midlands Engine Observatory will **respond to needs and opportunities** as they occur.

2. AREAS OF FOCUS

THE MIDLANDS ENGINE PARTNERSHIP - DRIVING GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACROSS THE MIDLANDS

The Midlands Engine partnership is a phenomenal force for pan-regional collaborative action. The Midlands Engine connects businesses, parliamentarians, local authorities, academics and more through our shared goal of greater prosperity for every part of our region. Together, we are delivering real, measurable benefits for the communities we all serve and our economy – because we view the big picture, convening, connecting, and acting as a focal point to drive economic growth.

In true collaboration, we identify, understand and act on the things that really matter in our region. As our partnership continues to grow – month-on-month, year-on-year – in strength and scale, there is a genuine collective commitment to maximise our momentum and support government ambitions to level up communities and economies for the greater benefit of our people, places, and businesses.

MIDLANDS ENGINE

WAYS OF WORKING

Advocacy - working
for our region, **with**
Government

Influencing - shaping
policy and investment
to **benefit** our region

Convening - driving
change through **collective**
action in partnership

Our ways of working

We leverage our regional scale, bring regional intelligence, a collective voice and with shared commitment to act - to benefit every part of our region.

Our delivery themes

Areas in which, working together, we can make the greatest difference to the things that matter in our region.

Our goal?

Regional prosperity

MIDLANDS ENGINE

PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY THEMES

Evidence & Intelligence
- data & research underpins
regional decision making
& policy shaping

Green Growth -
decarbonising industry &
expediting our journey to
net zero

Digital - smart public
services & digitalised
business driving regional
competitiveness

Transport - transforming
economic growth by
connecting our cities, our
towns & rural areas

Global - growing &
accelerating the global
reach of the Midlands
Engine

Health - championing &
amplifying our region's
unique sector strengths
across the UK & globally



MIDLANDS ENGINE CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS - LEVELLING UP FOR GOOD

Driven by underpinning evidence from the Midlands Engine Observatory the current areas of focus for the Midlands Engine include:

PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY THEMES





2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

The recently released [Levelling Up White Paper](#) provides an opportunity for the Midlands Engine Observatory to work with partners to ensure we continue to strengthen the Midlands Engine evidence base through new data sources, partnerships, and opportunities.

► Aims

- Continue to strengthen the Midlands Engine Observatory evidence base and partnerships through collaboration, horizon scanning for the potential use of data and new technologies such as AI.
- Maximise funding and research opportunities across the partnership through employing postgraduates, supporting research-funded projects, and understanding the impact of changing funding on the business base.
- Continue to stay abreast of opportunities as they emerge, reserving funding and capacity to support projects that respond to immediate need.
- Providing support to Midlands Engine themes through the production of Scorecards.

► Opportunities

Opportunities in this area include:

- Informing and monitoring the Levelling Up White Paper metrics across the region to track the impact of Levelling Up interventions and building partnership with the National Levelling Up Unit.
- Influence and inform local and national policy through the Partnership's research and insight across key sectors and Midlands Engine themes.
- Our Research Partnership brings together academics from across the region's universities to share research, opportunities, and insight. Meeting quarterly, the group helps identify research needs as well as undertaking research commissioned by the Midlands Engine.
- By commissioning policy pieces from the Research Partnership, the Observatory and our wider partners gains an understanding of the latest thinking aligned to our partnership priorities. These will be posted on the Midlands Engine Intelligence Hub, so they can be used to support policy making across the region.
- Supporting interns, graduates and students with their dissertations would support the Midlands Engine Observatory by providing additional research and policy pieces to the partnership. It also supports the skills development and employment of the region's postgraduate students, encouraging them to stay in the region.

► Actions

- 2.1.1 **Maximising University connections** - amplifying and disseminating of Midlands Engine university research to maximise the impact from the research e.g. Economic and Social Research Council projects etc. through collaboration and partnership. Collation and promotion of regular policy pieces from the Research Partnership and supporting internships, graduates and student placements.
- 2.1.2 Develop active working relationships with the **Levelling Up Unit and the new National Data Spatial Unit.**
- 2.1.3 Develop active working relationships with leading **think tanks** for example What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth. To include collaborative research and reports.
- 2.1.4 Identify and commission a **data exploration project**, utilising new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to access new data insights.
- 2.1.5 Understand the ongoing change and impact of changing **funding** on the business base.
- 2.1.6 Develop **Thematic Scorecards** to track and monitor progress and core metrics including **Levelling Up Factsheets and Dashboards** across all Missions.
- 2.1.7 Produce **factsheets** across all thematic areas to support MPs and partners with access to latest Midlands Engine intelligence and insights.
- 2.1.8 Support the **publication and distribution of reports.**
- 2.1.9 Develop **policy and influencing activities** for government, as well as relaying information into government.
- 2.1.10 Alongside planned activity and in order to stay agile to the requirements of the partnership throughout the year, budget will be retained to have the **ability to respond to emerging priorities.**



2.2 THE MIDLANDS MACRO-ECONOMY

The UK's exit from the European Union in 2021 represented a paradigm shift in the way we do business with the wider world. At the same time, the global pandemic created a two-fold economic challenge: not only do we have to cope with the immediate economic shock, we must also rebuild our economy, making it stronger, fairer and more resilient. Above all, we have to do so in a way that recognises the need for a clean and green future; climate change is the biggest challenge of all.

A series of regular products are produced by the Midlands Engine Observatory to ensure partners have the most robust, timely intelligence at their fingertips as they work together to meet these challenges. It is envisioned that these will adapt as the data needs of our partners' change.

► Aims

- Continuing to **grow and deepen the evidence base to understand the issues impacting the Midlands Economy** by maintaining the [Intelligence Hub](#) and continued intelligence reporting via Daily Intelligence Briefings, the monthly [Economic Impact Monitor Reports](#) and the annual [State of Region Report](#) which provides partners with real-time intelligence to inform and shape policy and decision making.
- Working in partnership with the **Midlands Engine Intelligence Community and the Midlands Engine Research Partnership on deep dives** across partner priority areas in order to jointly invest in understanding where targeted interventions may be required. Providing data-led analysis to drive tailored regional investment decisions and outcomes.
- Providing intelligence support in delivering the **Midlands Engine Priority work programmes** including green, digital, internationalisation, health, corridors etc. ensuring robust quality outputs for partners across programme areas.

'The Intelligence Hub is an excellent resource very much needed following cuts to local authority insight resource. The extensive work behind the scenes is appreciated.'

Darren Farmer, Research Co-ordinator, Staffordshire County Council

► Opportunities

The macro-economic data we have provides us with multiple opportunities, including:

- Providing government and partners with the crucial, in-depth insights needed for us to work together for **regional economic recovery**. We have the opportunity to set an example for how data-driven policy can affect economic recovery.

- Building on the [Independent Economic Review](#) from April 2020 as a framework within which we can direct **future research and address gaps** in knowledge about our region and its economy.

► Actions

2.1.1 Monthly Economic Impact monitoring

To understand the Midlands-scale impact of these challenges, the Observatory team, led by Black Country Consortium's Economic Intelligence Unit working with Nottingham Trent University and City-REDI at the University of Birmingham, and with inputs from across the Midlands Engine Intelligence Community, are undertaking ongoing, detailed assessments of the state of the Midlands economy. Their analyses are published in a [monthly Impact Monitor series](#), distributed to over a thousand stakeholders across the region. These monitors provide Midlands Engine partners and government with the crucial, in-depth insights needed for us to work together for regional economic recovery.

"[The] Economic Impact Monitors are really useful."

2.2.2 Midlands Engine Evidence Base

In July 2021 we launched the [Midlands Engine Intelligence Hub](#) structured around the Midlands Engine and Midlands Engine Observatory Priority themes. Through the Hub, partners can access all of the Midlands Engine Observatory products including access to **real-time data and spatial visualisations, the latest intelligence briefings, reports, and the primary research we have commissioned directly via the Research Partnership, alongside the latest thinking through academic think pieces.**

We continue to actively monitor and provide a structured **performance monitor for the Midlands Engine economy** on the health of the Midlands economy. At a touch of a button, partners can now access **real-time data via dynamic Power BI Dashboards**, ensuring they can always access the latest data which provides a single reliable source of truth.

The Observatory gives partners access to a wide range of up-to-date cross-thematic, spatial **data sets** and analysis via regular **intelligence briefings**.

Critical to the **Levelling Up** agenda is ensuring access to place-based narrative and **spatial visualisations** in order to understand how localities are performing, and where and how the pandemic and other macro or micro economic shocks are impacting the region.

Interpretation and intelligence briefings are key to translating the data into meaningful analysis, and the latest **briefings**

on all data releases can be accessed on the day through the Hub. We provide intelligence to allow the Midlands Engine partnership (via the Executive and Operating Boards) to make **informed decisions** on the Partnership's policies and areas of activity.

2.2.3 Deep Dive Reports

Alongside the Monthly Monitor, the Observatory produces dedicated **Deep Dive reports** on particular thematic areas, e.g. skills and natural capital. These areas are identified and driven by the agreed areas of focus through the Midlands Engine Operating and Executive Board, providing a robust evidence base to support programme delivery.

2.2.4 Quarterly Economic Briefings

The Observatory coordinates **Quarterly Economic Briefings (QEBs)**. These online seminars include a series of short updates on recent research or data published on the Midlands economy. QEBs share an overview of macro-economic conditions, a review of the Midlands economy based on latest data releases and are supplemented by talks on recently completed research.

10th December, Quarterly Economic Briefing 'High quality and insightful session - thanks!' Michael Evans, Senior Policy and Research Analyst, Derbyshire County Council

2.2.5 State of the Region Reports

Understanding the status of our economy is of vital importance, and the first annual **State of the Region report** for the Midlands Engine, published in November 2020, has been highly valued by partners. It has supported local decision making and provided the underpinning evidence for our Midlands Engine business plan.

The second, published in 2021, was an online, interactive report that provided analysis on how the region responded to the joint challenges of EU Exit and the pandemic.

State of the Region reports provide an assessment of the previous year's economic performance and update the baseline for our ongoing economic analysis of successes and opportunities.

2.2.6 Levelling Up Missions & Metrics

Building on the findings of the Independent Economic Review, the Observatory **commissioned research**

on the patchwork of economic development policy and strategy across the Midlands. It found that the geographically uneven and complex layers of local and sub-regional governance, with a mix of statutory and non-statutory organisations and responsibilities, pose difficulties for clear comparisons between sub-national and national policies. The variation around whether or not strategies include targets, and the nature of those targets, makes aggregation of targets across areas difficult. The ad hoc challenge of funding pots can compound problems of longer-term planning and coordination across geographical scales. While not all local/sub-regional strategies need to be the same, there is a case for greater consistency.

The recent release of the **Levelling Up White Paper** provides a new range of outcomes measures. The Midlands Engine Observatory will work with partners to ensure these are fit for purpose to support the Midlands Engine economy.

'Very interesting material which we are finding extremely helpful at Derby City Council.'

2.2.7 Economic Forecasts

Economic forecasting models enable the Midlands Engine partnership to understand the future growth potential of the economy. As well as providing long-term projections based on current and past economic performances, alternative futures can be modelled feeding into the evidence-based debate on the interventions required to achieve the ambitions of the region. Working with West Midlands Combined Authority and Midlands Connect, we have commissioned Oxford Economics to produce a model at a Midlands Engine level to forecast down to Local Authority level. It will be managed by the Superuser Group, a network of 10 Midlands superusers meeting regularly to share how the model is being used to inform policy.

2.2.8 Scorecards

Continue to update and report on the overall economic performance of the Midlands Engine economy via a **headline scorecard** which sets out a range of indicators of past and current performance, benchmarks to other regions and commentary.

CASE STUDY - Quarterly Economic Briefings

Our Quarterly Economic Briefings have included high profile speakers including Liz Martins, UK economist at HSBC; William Hobbs, Chief Investment Officer at Barclays; Charlotte Horobin from MAKE UK; and The Bank of England's Glynn Jones. Opened by the Midlands Engine Chairman, Sir John Peace, these Briefings have drawn together research on supply chains, the region's economic performance and the State of the Region reports, and the green opportunities in the Midlands.

They have attracted upwards of over 300 attendees from across the region. They bring together a range of partners to provide a live interactive forum to share directly with partners the latest intelligence in order to continue to inform our evidence base approach to decision making at the highest levels.



2.3 SECTORS AND SUPPLY CHAINS

A critical part of understanding the functioning of the economy is gaining insights into activities both between and across sectors and the complex nature of supply chain architecture. A range of research projects have been undertaken by the Partnership to understand this.

In order to more easily identify COVID-19 and EU Exit associated risks across sectors, the Midlands Engine Observatory will build on two risk matrices that have been developed. This is intended to support more targeted local policy and decision making that mitigates specific industry issues, particularly challenges to which Midlands Engine businesses, or the Midlands Engine economy, are disproportionately exposed.

The matrices' findings are based on a mix of quantitative data and qualitative insight from businesses across the region, taking advantage of industry links and relationships with local trade bodies and business groups.

► Aims

- The Midlands Engine Observatory aims to research and support the region's supply chains due to the importance of manufacturing and exports to the Midlands economy, and the impact of the pandemic and EU exit.
- By partnering with academics and businesses, the Midlands Engine Observatory aims to understand the limitations on supply chain security, growth of regional supply chains, and what is necessary to overcome these challenges.
- Supply chains cut across all the other themes of interest to the Midlands Engine. The Midlands Engine Observatory should ensure that this work reflects and aids the development of a diverse number of supply chains and businesses in the region.

► Opportunities

The findings of the research into the region's supply chains will help inform policy-making decisions as well as add to the burgeoning knowledge base of supply chains in the Midlands Engine region.

The work of the Midlands Engine Observatory both underpins and is aligned to all of the Partnership priorities areas including Health, Digital, Transport & Internationalisation. Consequently, there are opportunities to explore areas of overlap through supply chain and sectors research.

► Actions

- 2.1.1 Continue to **collaborate with other supply chain research** taking place across the region including the work of the Productivity Institute.
- 2.1.2 Work collaboratively with Midlands Aerospace Alliance, MAKE UK and other relevant sector bodies to deliver research pieces including identifying the challenges faced by clusters in the region, how these differ by location or sector and what solutions may be needed. This includes empirical research into how better to realise the innovation potential of 'hard-to-reach'/'long tail' manufacturing companies and the impact of Brexit on the region's tourism, hospitality, arts, and creative sectors. It also explores the potential for a green West Midlands manufacturing sector with a focus on automotive original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), understanding the impact of food security and international and local supply chains within wider impacts, and opportunities on importing and exporting.

CASE STUDY - Manufacturing

The **Midlands Engine Manufacturing Opportunities Report**, published in September 2021, followed on from a collaboration with MAKE UK which identified the manufacturing strengths of the region. The Report also reflected the **sector supply chain reports** commissioned in 2020. It focuses on the future possibilities within manufacturing, particularly the growth of digital technologies and green products and services, that could lead to an extra 165,000 jobs for the economy and £13.7 billion in GVA.

This Report was then circulated and promoted further at the **Manufacturing Conference held by Morningside Pharmaceuticals in November 2021**. The meeting was convened by Midlands Engine, MAKE UK and East Midlands Chamber, in partnership with leading UK think tank, The Centre for Social Justice. It builds on Midlands Engine research showcasing the vast strengths (Midlands Engine makes) and potential (Midlands Engine Manufacturing Opportunities) of Midlands manufacturing.



2.4 HEALTH

Recognising the fundamental connection between health and the economy, Midlands Engine has worked closely with industry, academic, health sector and public sector partners to establish **Midlands Engine Health** – a collaboration that enables us to effectively champion and expand our region’s world-leading capabilities in health, medical technologies and life sciences. The Midlands Engine Observatory will continue to support the work of [Midlands Engine Health](#).

Our regional strengths and capabilities in health, med-tech and life sciences are extensive, generating in excess of £25 billion GVA each year and enabling health inequalities to be tackled. Our region is home to the largest cluster of med-tech companies in the UK which deliver over 33,000 highly skilled jobs, and seven Medical Schools which train over 20% of the UK’s medical students.

The Midlands Engine Observatory is also supporting the work of the Midlands [Health Inequalities Policy Commission](#).

► Aims

- The Midlands Engine Observatory will work collaboratively with Midlands Engine Health to understand the economic impact of ill health, the economic causes of ill health, and the importance of health in the workplace for productivity.
- Continue to advance research into the **Health and Life Sciences sector** in the Midlands Engine: Developing and Supporting Manufacturing Capacity.

► Opportunities

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed a great importance on both mental and physical health. As we continue to recover from the effects of the pandemic, we can capitalise on people’s willingness to change to embed health into economic measures and daily life. This may include but is not limited to:

- Understanding the impact of our towns, cities, buildings, and green spaces on health.
- Encouraging healthier working practices.
- Supporting employers to pay closer attention to employee physical and mental health.
- Improving the productivity of the workforce through increased health.
- Lengthening life expectancy through understanding the determinants of ill health and the benefits of good health.

► Actions

- 2.4.1 Collaborate with **Midlands Engine Health** and other partners to identify the areas of greatest need to design and commission research to support these areas.
- 2.4.2 Measure, where possible, the **economic impact** and determinants of ill health – mental and physical, including the **impact on productivity**.
- 2.4.3 In line with the priorities developed by the Midlands Health Board, advance research into the **sector** and supporting supply chains.

CASE STUDY

The Manufacturing Technology Centre is researching how the existing manufacturing capabilities in the Health and Life Science sector can be supported and developed. This includes understanding the supply chain and identifying other manufacturers that may be able to support the sector.

By understanding the key strengths and capabilities of health manufacturing businesses in the region, we can understand the hurdles they face to successfully deliver products for healthcare settings. The report will develop recommendations for how the region can support industrial and research capabilities for the sector.



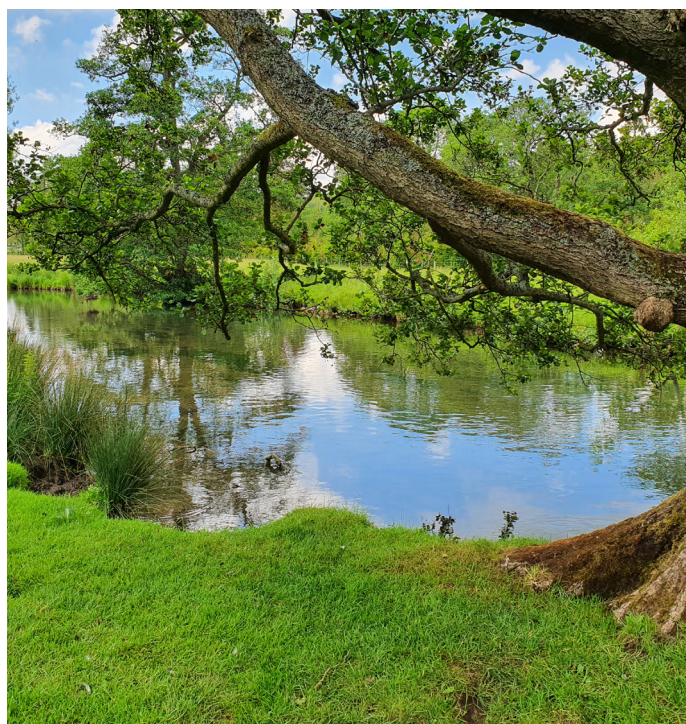
2.5 GREEN GROWTH

► Aims

- The Midlands Engine Observatory will support the stakeholder delivery of the [Ten Point Plan Green Growth](#) for the Midlands Engine.

► Opportunities

As the government continues to drive towards a net zero carbon future, the Midlands Engine has the potential to lead the way in regional delivery of emission reductions contributing to the nationally determined contributions (NDCs). 2021 saw the launch of our [Ten Point Plan for Green Growth](#) which sets our clear ambitions for the region and includes our Partnership ambitions on delivering aspects of the 25 Year Plan for Environment, Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) and our region's [Hydrogen Technologies Strategy](#).



Our approach could shape the national and regional delivery of net zero goals across the UK. Momentum from COP26, held in Edinburgh in 2021, and the increasing public recognition of the climate crisis provide a unique moment to gain momentum towards our net zero goals. The Midlands Engine Observatory will provide the underpinning and emerging evidence base with regard to the green growth agenda and draw together the wide range of academic research being undertaken across the region.

► Actions

- 2.5.1 Provide support to partners delivering the **Ten Point Plan** to identify areas of need and develop and deliver research to fill the identified knowledge gaps.
- 2.5.2 Continue to develop and enhance the suite of **digital tools** to study the green growth agenda including the [Green Growth Storymap](#) and [Natural Capital Monitor](#) to inform decision making and policy.
- 2.5.3 Undertake research to understand the green skills needed in the future, focusing on the sector skill profile, a definition of green skills, and deep dives into specific industries.
- 2.5.4 Develop methodologies on the impact of interventions on economic, social and environmental outcomes to help measure them, including regional and Levelling Up.
- 2.5.5 Understand the value of the **region's natural capital** and identify where public money and private investment can be made in nature-based solutions to deliver public goods, supply chain resilience, flood risk reduction and a suite of ecosystem services as metrics for financial and non-financial return on investment.

CASE STUDY

The Natural Capital Monitor provides a way of quantifying the value of and identifying the natural assets of the region, such as ancient forests, rivers and canals, and protected areas. Our natural environment provides incredible benefits to our region's communities and businesses, including clean air, water, carbon capture and other necessities. Our natural capital is worth £330 billion to the region over the next 100 years, with £199 billion coming from the water supply alone.

The Natural Capital Monitor is part of our [Ten Point Plan for Green Growth in the Midlands Engine](#) and has been created to support our partnership to measure our collective impact on nature's recovery and our region's blue-green places - two important action areas of the plan.



2.6 DIGITAL

► Aims

- The Midlands Engine Observatory will support the work of the **Midlands Engine Digital Board** and capitalise on digital as a driver to boost productivity, amplifying the work of our partners to create a region of unrivalled connectivity, digital innovation, and expertise.

► Opportunities

The COVID-19 pandemic has made digital ways of working and digital skills increasingly essential. However, there are still businesses and individuals who are either not using digital technologies at all or not to their full potential due to issues around skills, affordability, and infrastructure. The recent acknowledgement of the importance of digital means there is an increased interest in ensuring digital infrastructure is in place, and that people have the skills and means to access it. This means there are opportunities to increase the roll out of 4G, 5G, wired and broadband internet across the whole region, fill skills gaps across the population, and encourage the uptake of basic and innovative digital solutions in the workplace. The region also is leading the multi-city roll out of 5G and has digital research and business capabilities. However, it also has

numerous areas and firms where digital uptake is low, providing case studies for how to increase uptake.

DIME, or Discontinuous Innovation in the Midlands Engine, looks at the ways the internet and associated technologies might develop in the future. It outlines the opportunities for discontinuous innovation, or the ability to make large steps up in technology and the role of democratisation of the internet through digital currencies. A second step in this research is to see what role the Midlands Engine could play in these developments.

► Actions

- 2.6.1 Identify what digital skills are lacking amongst the workforce both now and in the future building on the digital skills partnership.
- 2.6.2 Identify potential digital growth areas, e.g. digital businesses, digital clusters. Identify barriers to growth and success and what is needed to support them. This may be related to the clusters research.
- 2.6.3 Understand the impact of COVID-19 on digital poverty and digital uptake, and the role of digital as recovery continues, and the emerging cost of living crisis.

CASE STUDY

Working with West Midlands 5G, we have identified the areas of the region that have lower than average broadband connectivity and poor 4G internet connectivity, and improved connectivity for residents. This allows both organisations to collaborate to tackle poor connectivity across the region.

The Midlands has the highest level of 5G mobile coverage, as ranked by independent telecoms advisory company, Umlaut. The 5G RuralFirst project is also trialling wireless and networking technologies to better connect people across the Shropshire and Worcestershire 5G consortium. The project investigated whether 5G connectivity could be rolled out in hard-to-reach rural areas where mobile network operators (MNOs) have limited engagement due to low return on investment compared to urban environments.



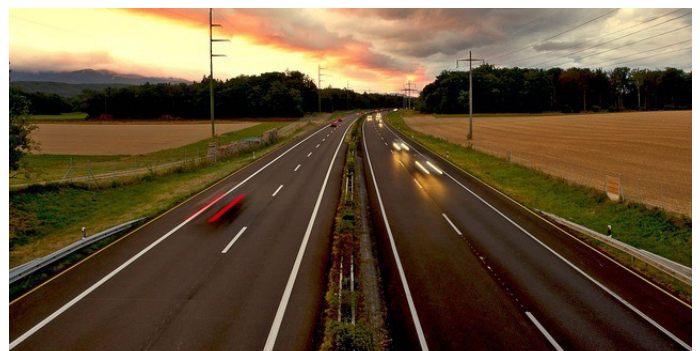
2.7 TRANSPORT

► Aims

- We will continue to work closely with **Midlands Connect** on a joint research programme to support understanding of the changing transport needs in the region. Alongside Midlands Connect, we will focus on **strategic economic corridors** to support the economic and social growth of the region

► Actions

- 2.7.1 Joint working with Midlands Connect.





2.8 INVESTMENT

► Aims

- Supporting the role of the [Midlands Engine partnership](#) in turning Global Britain into reality and providing the evidence and intelligence to expand our global footprint in support of Levelling Up. Increasing inward investment and exports will also help to close the £83 billion productivity gap in the Midlands leading to greater prosperity for our communities and economic growth at scale.

► Opportunities

The Midlands Engine Observatory is working on the mapping of the investment opportunities identified to provide a spatial mapping of the wide range of opportunities across the Partnership. This will provide an easy way for investors to see what the Midlands Engine has to offer.

► Actions

- 2.8.1 Presentation of the Midlands **Investment Portfolio** via high-quality data, digital and marketing assets.
- 2.8.2 Develop a **functional evidence-base** for internationalisation, including thought-leadership report and analysis to identify Midlands sectoral clusters of the future.
- 2.8.3 Understand the impact of investments in local prosperity and jobs, especially in relation to Levelling Up, and how the impact of investment in localities can be improved.
- 2.8.4 Track the levels of investment into the region in comparison to other regional and national figures.

CASE STUDY

The Midlands Engine Observatory and Midlands Connect have been working collaboratively to understand our regional strategic corridors and transport patterns.

Our regional corridors, the A50/500 and the A46, are home to many of the region's manufacturing companies. The A46 alone contributes 25% of automotive sector goods and 20% of agri-food jobs. The pandemic has seen patronage of rail and other public transport decrease. This, coupled with historic shortages in investment, poses current and future challenges for transport in the region.

CASE STUDY

The Midlands Engine Chairman, Sir John Peace, helped promote the region's international investment opportunities for global business leaders. The **exclusive event**, run by the Department for International Trade, also saw the launch of the UK Investment Atlas which featured an initial portfolio of green investment opportunities.

In order to understand and develop investment opportunities in the Midlands, Midlands Engine is creating a Midlands Engine Investment Atlas. The inclusion of some of these opportunities within the dataset for our strategic corridors work mean that projects are already integrated to ensure greater success and impact.



2.9 LABOUR MARKET AND SKILLS

► Aims

- The Midlands Engine Observatory seeks to understand the ever-changing nature of the labour market and the skills required to drive a productive and modern economy. Research will respond to changes in the labour market, such as the EU Exit, COVID-19, and digital technologies.

► Opportunities

As remote work becomes more prevalent as recovery from COVID-19 continues, there is the opportunity to dramatically change who participates in the workforce and the way work is done. This includes the need for digital skills, as mentioned in the digital priority area. It may also offer increasing levels of part-time, flexible, and remote work which may allow disabled people and those with caring responsibilities to enter the workforce.

As jobs move towards green priorities, the skills required will also change to reflect this adjustment. This includes overtly green skills, such as retrofitting or servicing electric vehicles as well as more subtle green skills such as managing investments in the development of green technologies. These skill needs are covered in the Green Growth priority.

This opportunity also interacts with the possibility to improve employee health through the health priority.

► Actions

- 2.9.1 Monthly monitoring and reporting on key Midlands Engine **labour market intelligence** through updates to the Midlands Engine Intelligence Hub and Regional Economic Impact Monitors.

CASE STUDY

The women in leadership research undertaken by the University of Wolverhampton shows the possibilities of increasing the diversity and representation across the region's workplaces. This may lead to improved profitability and innovation, which would increase wages for employees.

The research also sought to understand ways in which more women can be supported in and into leadership positions. It also identified key barriers that stop women going into or thriving in leadership roles, and possible solutions for these issues.



Edwina Dunn



Suzy Verma



Professor Silke Machold



Ewa Truchanowicz



2.10 INNOVATION

► Aims

- The Midlands Engine Observatory will support innovation as a cross cutting theme across all the work of the Engine. Innovation has been at the heart of the Midlands Engine's focus since its inception, with 'increasing innovation and enterprise' outlined as a key ambition in the 'Midlands Engine Vision for Growth'.

► Opportunities

Horizon scanning for each of our priority areas, recognising that focuses within these areas will shift as new challenges or technologies emerge. As we recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and the EU Exit, there will be ongoing challenges and opportunities to do things differently.

► Actions

- 2.10.1 Continually engage in horizon-scanning activities including engaging with universities, researchers and think tanks to understand the latest thought and advancements across our priority areas.



CASE STUDY

Midlands Innovation Health, Midlands Health Alliance, and Medilink Midlands **published a report** to highlight the region's research excellence to support the national COVID-19 pandemic effort. 99 COVID-19 research programmes have been launched by Midlands Innovation since May 2020. Experts in healthcare and medicine, economics, engineering, environment, law and social science have received research projects worth £53 million.

Projects are diverse. A team at the University of Nottingham looked at how the COVID-19 virus acts on plastic surfaces to inform the manufacturing of better PPE. A team at Loughborough University researched how healthcare settings, offices and retail spaces could benefit from improved ventilation. Together, all of these projects sought to understand the COVID-19 virus, control its spread, and improve treatment.



3. IMPACT

A core principle of the work of the Midlands Engine Observatory is ensuring activity is delivering real impact for the region. By providing up-to-date evidence and explaining the nuances and impact on the Midlands through rigour and academic insight, the work of the Midlands Engine Observatory ensures:

- Stronger business cases with the potential to secure greater investment for the region.
- Robust comparisons, benchmarking and forecasting to support policy recommendations.
- Evidenced regional impact insights to inform reactions to government policy and lobbying.
- Better understanding of regional needs and opportunities to target investment for the widest possible economic and social impact.



OBSERVATORY Our Impact

Only region in England to have a pan-regional Observatory, drawing on the expert capabilities of 16+ institutions - gathering data, creating intelligence, shaping policy insights and helping target investment for recovery and growth.

HEADLINE MEASURES OF SUCCESS AND THE MIDLANDS ENGINE VALUE CHAIN:

Role:	Midlands Engine Observatory Activity:	Midlands Engine Observatory 2022/2023 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Convenes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate partners to identify and deliver policy and investment priorities which make significant pan-regional impact in the key areas of green growth, digital, health and internationalisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bring together on a quarterly basis a wide range of partnerships voices - business, academia etc. via Midlands Engine Research Partnership, Midlands Engine Intelligence Community and hold Quarterly Economic Briefing Events with a growing number of participants.
Influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the partnership cannot deliver alone, work together to develop compelling externally-facing policy and investment proposals for these priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify 10 gaps in evidence and publish reports on each to address the gaps ✓ Create and publish four influencing/thought leadership pieces to address weakness in the current evidence base.
Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convince government/ other external organisations to deliver policy and investment decisions in the region's favour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Generate and publish 12 publications to advocate for our region.
Delivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist partners to deliver better social, economic and environmental outcomes for the Midlands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide ongoing evidence base via the Intelligence Hub to support stronger business cases with the potential to secure greater investment for the region.

THE BELOW TABLE SUMMARISES THE KPIS ON AN ANNUAL BASIS 2022/23, 2023/24 AND 2024/25

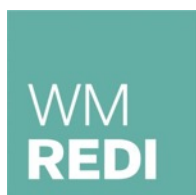
Month	Quarterly Economic Briefings	Research Partnership	Programme Board	Intelligence Community	Regional Economic Intelligence Monitor and Deep Dives	Research Programme Outputs	Update of ME Intelligence Hub	State of the Region	Thematic Score-cards
January			X		X	X	X		X
February				X	X	X	X		X
March	X	X			X	X	X		X
April					X	X	X		X
May		X		X	X	X	X		X
June	X		X		X	X	X		X
July		X		X	X	X	X		X
August					X	X	X		X
September	X		X		X	X	X		X
October					X	X	X		X
November		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
December	X		X		X	X	X		X



istock.com

4. REGIONAL ASSETS

The Midlands Engine Observatory is an alliance of leading academic researchers and economic and industry experts, working together to deliver the regionally focused research and analysis our partners need to inform decision making and policy creation, for every part of the Midlands. The Midlands Engine Region is home to a number of global leading research units. The following logos are just some of the examples of the economic development centres of expertise we have within the region across the Research Partnership.



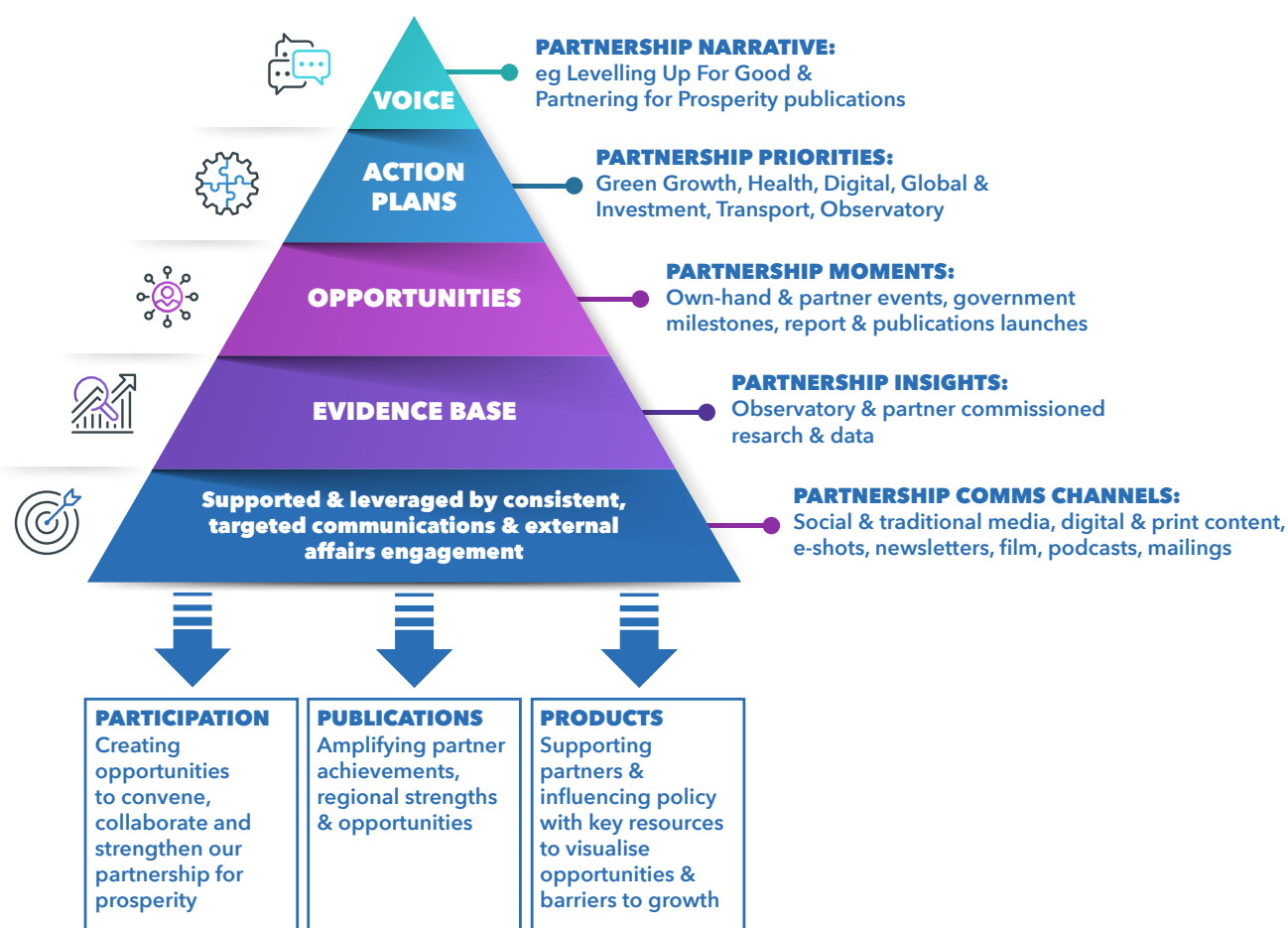
5. COMMUNICATIONS

Dissemination is vital. If our partners do not know about the work we have done, they cannot share it with their contacts or support the recommendations. Recommendations without actions will not make a difference.

The Midlands Engine Observatory has a **communications and external affairs plan and a 12-month work plan**, informed by the work that we produce across the year. Through our triple focus on Participation, Publications and Products (see below), we disseminate the valuable research and insights that we have gained through research and our data.

With strong alignment of messages, a strong brand ownership, and identification with our aims and priorities, the Midlands Engine partnership can drive change and investment for the greater economic prosperity of our region. As shown in the diagram below, our Observatory provides the evidence base that gives credibility to our communications as we raise awareness of the Midlands Engine and our action plan areas, and the work and priorities of our partners and target audience. This results in tangible outputs in terms of:

- Participation** A dynamic calendar of events and opportunities for partners and key stakeholders to convene, connect and accelerate actions around our shared vision of economic growth and prosperity for all.
- Publications** A regular flow of published reports and documents to raise awareness of our region's exceptional strengths and opportunities, and our achievements and impact in partnership.
- Products** Key resources to support our partners in identification and communication opportunities and decision making, and to influence policy – such as our Digital Connected Map, Intelligence Hub, and Investment Portfolio.



6. GOVERNANCE AND WAYS OF WORKING

► 6.1 Midlands Engine Observatory Programme Board

The work of the Observatory is overseen and guided by a Programme Board, which in turn reports through to the Executive Board of the Midlands Engine, ensuring partnership decision making is underpinned by evidence and data. The Board is independently chaired, supported by the Midlands Engine Executive Team (secretariat function) and comprises representatives from government, the research community and end users of economic data and intelligence in the Midlands – plus the Director of the Midlands Engine Partnership.

The Observatory is funded by the Midlands Engine and its partners – in particular our academic partners, who co-invest in all the research we produce together.

► 6.2 Midlands Engine Observatory Executive Team

The Observatory has a dedicated team comprising of a Director, access to the Black Country Consortium's Economic Intelligence Unit Team of Analysts, a lead Officer, a Project Manager, Graduate and a Research Partnership Co-ordinator who manage the efficient running of the Observatory and work within the Midlands Engine Executive team reporting to the Midlands Engine Executive Director.

► 6.3 Midlands Engine Research Partnership

The Midlands Engine Research Partnership provides a forum for universities from across the Midlands to come together quarterly to scope areas of research needed by the Midlands Engine, steer research, collaborate on projects, secure external funding for projects and input into key policy reviews and strategy formulation for the Midlands Engine.

Our experts are drawn from the Midlands' own universities, partner institutions and private sector organisations, ensuring that we maximise the vast knowledge potential of our region. A list of the current members is appended to this document.

► 6.4 Midlands Engine Intelligence Community

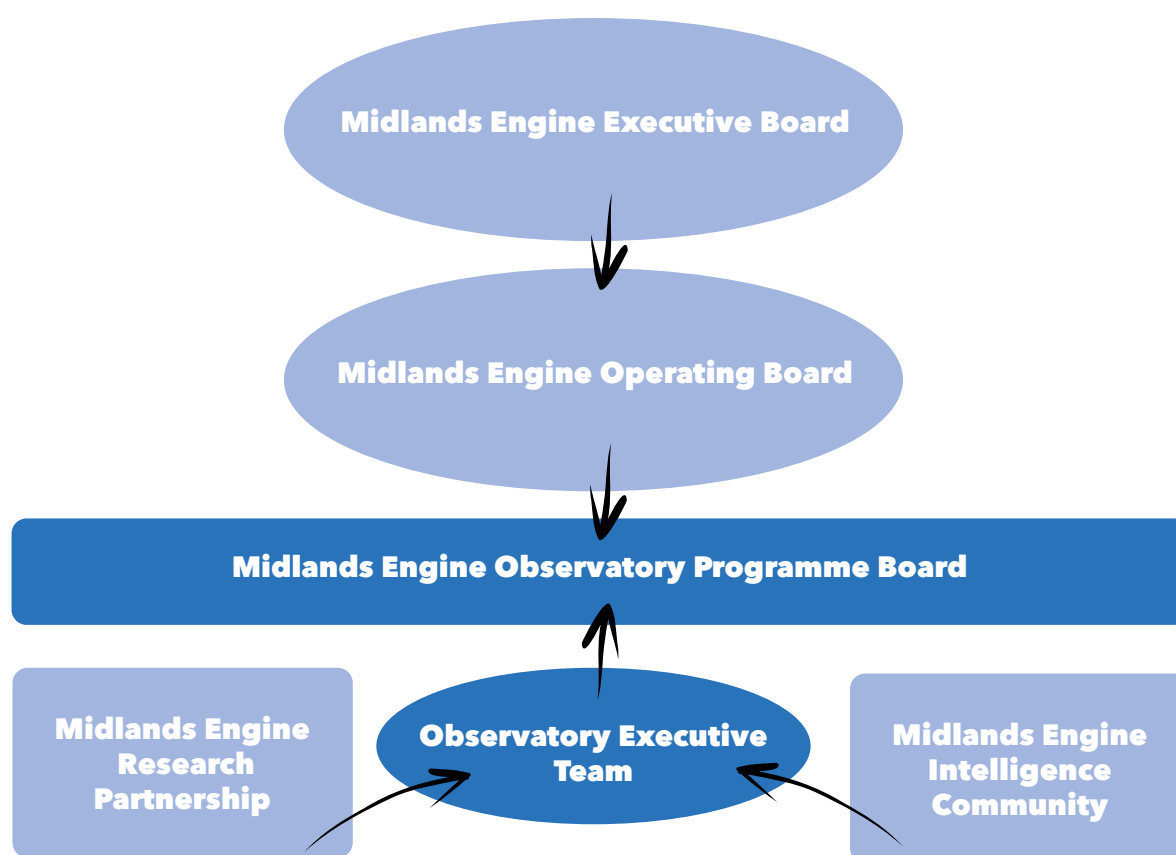
The Midlands Engine Intelligence Community is an open and non-exclusive forum for bodies involved in the gathering and dissemination of economic intelligence in the Midlands. The Midlands Engine Intelligence Community is a vehicle for sharing intelligence, to enable stakeholders to input into the work programme of the Midlands Engine Observatory and for stakeholders to highlight areas where they can collaboratively work together. Membership of the Midlands Engine Intelligence Community provides partners with the opportunity to receive updates on key research programmes, to volunteer support and share data and best practice.

► 6.5 Midlands Engine National Intelligence Networks

The Midlands Engine Observatory will ensure the work of the region is linked into national groups to ensure work is showcased and collaboration with areas outside the region can be identified to add value. Current groups the Midlands Engine Observatory is represented on include:

- Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) External Supply Chain Expert Group
- Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP network) – research groups
- Office for National Statistics Combined Authority (ONS CA) Liaison Groups
- Treasury Green Book User Group – we are establishing a ME level user group to feed into the national network.

MIDLANDS ENGINE OBSERVATORY CURRENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



APPENDIX

1.1 RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP PARTNERS

	LEAD INSTITUTION		LEAD INSTITUTION
1	Aston University	9	Nottingham Trent University
2	Birmingham City University	10	The Manufacturing Technology Centre
3	Black Country Consortium	11	University of Birmingham
4	Coventry University	12	University of Leicester
5	De Montfort University	13	University of Lincoln
6	Derby University	14	University of Nottingham
7	Keele University	15	University of Warwick
8	Loughborough University	16	University of Wolverhampton

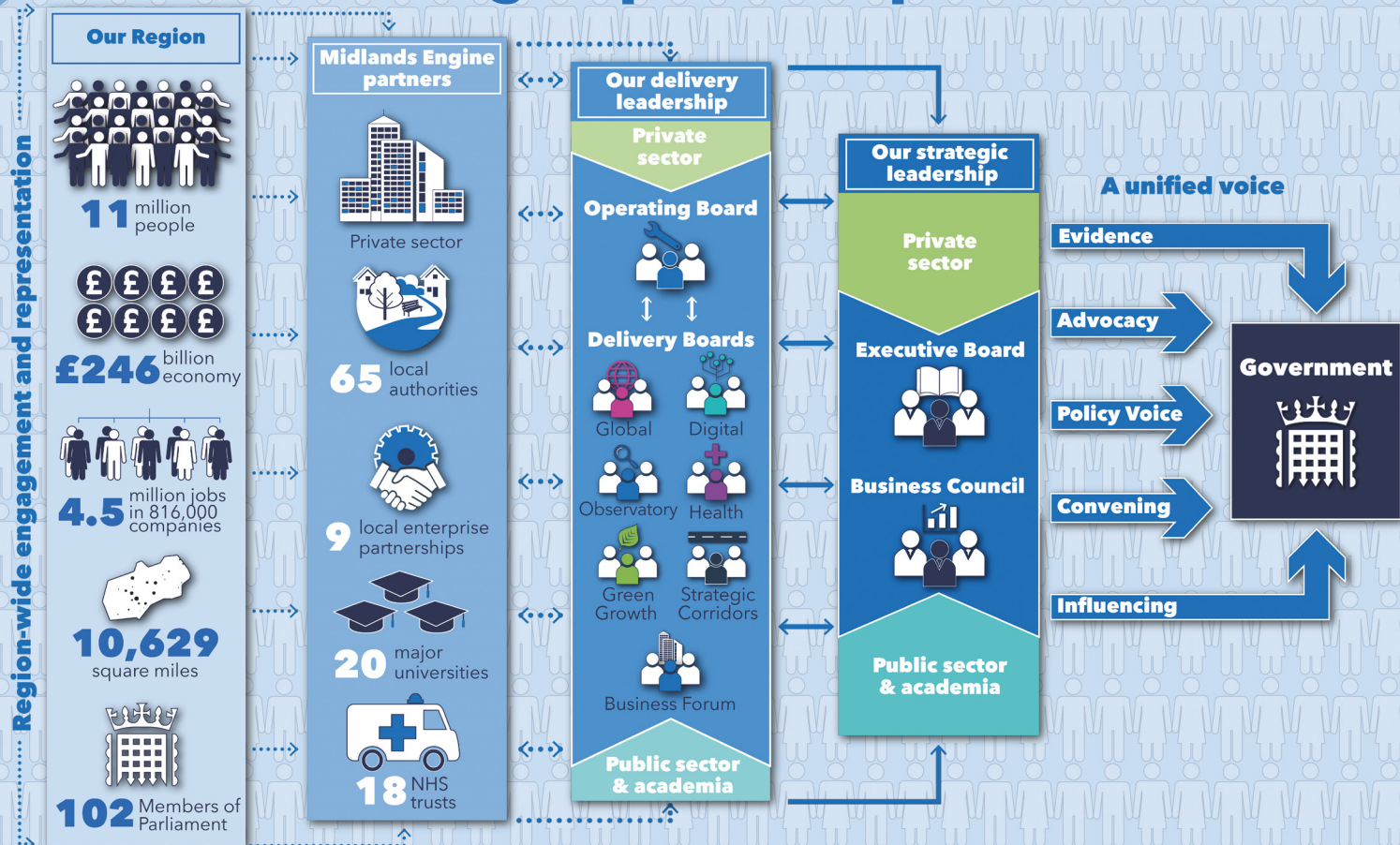
1.2 2020/21 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

THIS TABLE OUTLINES THE PRODUCTS FROM THE 2020/21 MIDLANDS ENGINE OBSERVATORY RESEARCH PROGRAMME:

Title	Lead Investigator	Institution	Report Published	Link
1. Supply Chains Analysis:			Published	Microsoft Word - Exec summary.docx (midlandsengine.org)
Opportunities and challenges for industrial supply chains in the Midlands region: A systematic review	Professor Janet Godsell	University of Warwick	31/03/2021	Midlands-Engine-Supply-Research-Report-Industrial-Supply-Chains-1.pdf (midlandsengine.org)
ACURSC - 'Anti-COVID-19 Capabilities Underpinning Resilient Supply Chains' framework: evidence from manufacturing firms in food supply chains in the Midlands-UK	Professor Charbel Jose Chiappetta Jabbour	University of Lincoln	31/03/2021	Microsoft Word - Food.docx (midlandsengine.org)
The resilience of advanced manufacturing supply chains across the Midlands	Professor Alex de Ruyter	Birmingham City University	31/03/2021	Microsoft Word - Manufacturing.docx (midlandsengine.org)
The advanced manufacturing (including med-tech) sector supply chains	Dr Thorsten Kampmann	The Manufacturing Technology Centre	31/03/2021	Microsoft Word - Manufacturing.docx (midlandsengine.org)
Towards net zero: Exploring the current state of low carbon supply chains in the Midlands	Professor Janet Godsell	University of Warwick	31/03/2021	Microsoft Word - Low carbon.docx (midlandsengine.org)
2. Mapping the architecture of economic development policy and strategy across the Midlands Engine pan-region	Professor Anne Green	City-REDI, University of Birmingham	31/03/2021	Microsoft Word - 20210526 ME Spatial Economic Development Architecture Report.docx (midlandsengine.org)
3. Promoting Green Growth in the Midlands Engine pan-region	Professor Upul Wijayantha	Loughborough University	05/03/2021	
4. The Health and Life Sciences sector in the Midlands Engine: Developing and Supporting Manufacturing Capacity	Dr Thorsten Kampmann	The Manufacturing Technology Centre	March 2022	

Title	Lead Investigator	Institution	Report Published	Link
5. Enabling Digital Competitiveness (DIME)	Professor Peter Kawalek	Loughborough University	31/07/2021	Microsoft Word - Discontinuous Innovation Midlands Engine (DIME) Report-Final v2.docx
6. Manufacturing Opportunities in the Midlands Engine		Midlands Engine Observatory	30/09/2021	Midlands-Manufacturing-Opportunities-Nov-2021.pdf (midlandsendengine.org)
7. Economic Forecasting Model	Kelly Houston	Oxford Economics	31/07/2021	License Only
8. Impact of Green Growth Plan	Barry Evans	WSP	31/05/2021	https://www.midlandsendengine.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Ten-Point-Plan-for-Green-Growth-in-the-Midlands-Engine_V1-1.pdf
9. ZERO	Dr Arshad Varma	WSP	March 2022	
10. Women in Leadership	Professor Silke Machold	University of Wolverhampton	March 2022	https://www.midlandsendengine.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Women-in-Business-Leadership-in-the-Midlands_FINAL-MARCH-2022-1.pdf
11. State of the Region Report 2021		Midlands Engine Observatory	02/11/2021	ME-State-of-the-region-Exec-summary-Oct-2021.pdf (midlandsendengine.org)
12. Social Enterprise		Social Enterprise UK/ Midlands Engine Observatory	30/11/2021	Midlands-Engine-Social-Enterprise-Executive-Summary.pdf (midlandsendengine.org)
13. Impact of Hydrogen		WSP	February 2022	https://www.midlandsendengine.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Midlands-Engine-Hydrogen-Technologies-Strategy-Feb-2022.pdf
14. Green Finance	Dan Carins	Black Country Consortium Ltd.	March 2022	

Our Midlands Engine partnership



Our Partnership - The Midlands Engine is the largest regional economy in the UK outside London and the place that 11 million people call home. Our Midlands Engine partnership spans the heart of the UK. Working at scale, we focus on adding value - tackling the things that really matter in our region to drive prosperity for our communities and businesses.

Our Impact - Together, we make sure the Midlands voice is heard and act as a positive agent for economic, social and environmental change, to benefit every single part of our region. We do this through shared intent, collaborative investment and a unified voice, direct to government.

MIDLANDS ENGINE



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The Midlands Engine is a coalition of local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, 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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