

# MIDLANDS MATTERS - ISSUE 8



## Welcome to Issue 8 of Midlands Matters, our Partnership newsletter.

This edition of our partnership newsletter is focused on the 810,000 businesses in our region, the vast majority of them are small and medium sized enterprises that play a significant role in the growth and future economic prosperity of our region.

With the welcomed news regarding the development of several Covid-19 vaccines, we have cause to be optimistic, however the landscape remains extremely challenging. This newsletter contains insights from experts across our region on the challenges faced by SMEs in respect to the impact of Covid -19 and the impending end of the European Union transition period. We also explore the opportunities open to our region such as the support available through the Midlands Engine Investment Fund.

Also, this month we have progressed our Midlands Engine Green Growth Conversation. Last week I hosted a senior roundtable of energy leaders focusing on the challenges and opportunities in the sector, and a workshop on the Midlands Engine Environment Strategy – another crucial part of our Green Growth Conversation. We are supporting our region to build back better, stronger, and greener – an ambition which was matched by the Prime Minister’s ten point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. We as a region had already identified these priorities, and are delighted to see them recognised at the highest level.

Our Observatory has continued to publish reports on the impact of the pandemic on our economy, and this month also published reports on the effects of Covid-19 on International Trade, and on Energy and Low Carbon. All of those reports are available to [download here](#).

I would like to finish with the Midlands UK Forum for Growth. This week we are showcasing over £17bn of our partners’ tangible investment opportunities to an audience of investors from all around the world. This event was borne out of the cancellation of MIPIM in March and made possible by the hard work of partners and the commitment of our region. Thank you to our 20 destination partners, to our commercial partners and supporters, to our 50 exhibitors, and to the over 500 attendees who have come together to ensure the Forum for Growth will be a great success.

The Midlands UK Forum for Growth is a brilliant example of working in partnership – Midlands partners coming together to showcase the economic potential of our region to the world. An exceptional opportunity to show off the Midlands to the world.

With my best wishes,

Sir John Peace, Midlands Engine Chairman

**MIDLANDS ENGINE LATEST****Midlands Engine showcases £17.6 billion of investment opportunities at landmark conference**

First of its kind event brings together local and global leaders to drive regional growth over 3 days with speakers including Sir John Peace, Mayor of Leicester Sir Peter Soulsby, and West Midlands Mayor Andy Street.

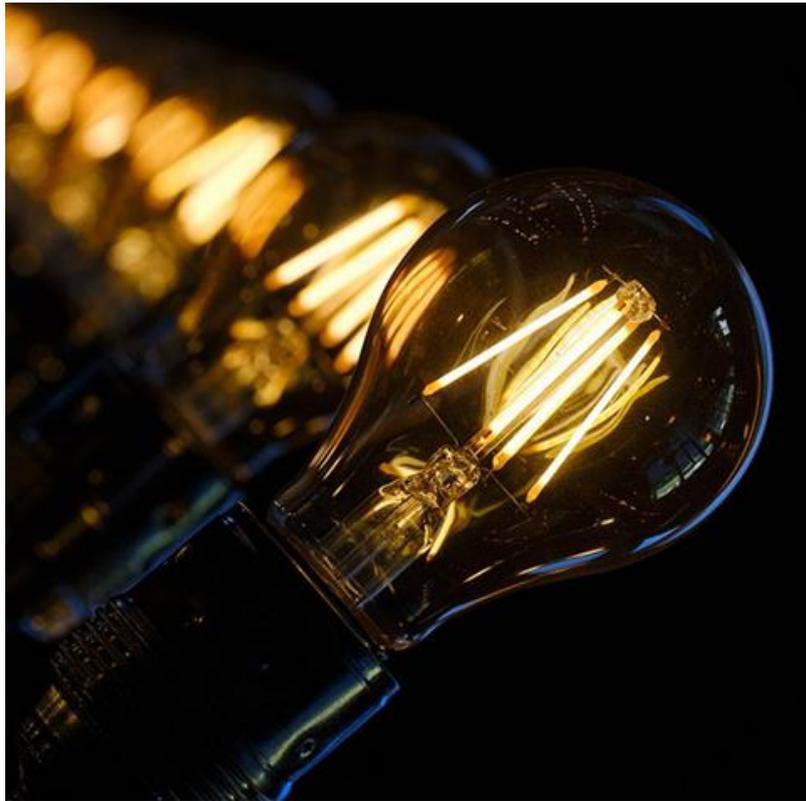
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**Midlands UK  
Forum for Growth****Midlands Engine leads on Conversation to reach Net-Zero**

The Midlands Engine has launched a region-wide conversation with the aims of understanding the energy challenges in our region and identifying initiatives and opportunities in clean energy.

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## ENABLING ENTERPRISE



### **Focus on... Enabling Enterprise: supporting Midlands SMEs to drive recovery and growth**

This month, in collaboration with our partners, we're taking a detailed look at how our region's

SMEs are being supported during this challenging time. Speaking with voices from around the region, this piece will discuss how the ongoing pandemic, and the looming deadline for an EU exit deal, are impacting our region's small and medium sized businesses.

#### READ IN DEPTH

"SMEs create more job opportunities than big corporates – 60% of UK jobs are in SMEs. But SMEs need confidence, clarity and certainty about the future to help them grow. These things are all in short supply at the moment, due to Covid-19 and the end of the transition period. Supporting economic growth as a region is the best way to support our SMEs."

*Sir John Peace, Midlands Engine Chairman*

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"Manufacturing is now better prepared for this second lockdown. Previously, many producers had to pivot towards supplying different types of

products. They're now able to sell direct to the consumer. Many factories in the Midlands are precision-making fundamental pieces to keep, for example, nuclear power stations and hospitals running."

*Charlotte Horobin, Regional Director, Midlands and East of England, Make UK*

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"More recently many rural tourism businesses have seen a boost as staycations have become more common. Rural attractions have faced operational challenges while opening and maintaining safety. Estate agents in rural areas have seen a sharp rise in enquiries as working from home becomes the new normal. Higher Covid-19 infection rates have been in cities so rural areas have come to be seen as safer. Many rural areas do have significant vulnerable populations however, where residents are older."

*Professor Stephen Roper, Director at Enterprise Research Centre, Co-Director at National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise and Professor of Enterprise at Warwick Business School*

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“Depleting cash reserves make for startling statistics. The West Midlands could be facing a potential loss of 26,000 firms and 375,000 jobs, and figures in the East Midlands are likely to be similar. These are depressing figures that could take years to reverse. It is also highly likely that we’ll see a downturn in the number of new enterprises started.”

*Professor Mark Hart, Deputy Director of the Enterprise Research Centre (ERC)*

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**Largest study of voluntary organisations in partnership with NTU reveals devastating financial impacts of Covid-19**

The first results from the new Covid-19 Voluntary Sector Impact Barometer show that 2 in 5 (39%) charities and community groups are now reporting a deteriorating financial situation.

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### **DMU experts contribute to Government's horizon scanning report on the impacts of COVID**

Experts from De Montfort University Leicester (DMU) have shared their views on the two-to-five years effects of the pandemic for a House of Lords COVID-19 Committee inquiry. Published in a recent report by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), DMU Professor of Digital Culture Tracy Harwood has considered the impact of the pandemic on the country's creative and cultural industries.

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## **Centre for Growth at Aston University offers Small Business Leadership Programme**

The Small Business Leadership Programme supports senior leaders to enhance their business's resilience and recovery from the impact of COVID-19. It helps small and medium-sized businesses to develop their potential for future growth and productivity.

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## Roundup of University support for Midlands SMEs

Universities across the Midlands are supporting SMEs in a variety of ways, from programmes to help businesses identify their skills and talent needs, to sector specific projects tasked with making business greener.

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### MORE NEWS FROM THE MIDLANDS

## East Midlands leaders call for full delivery of HS2's Eastern Leg to bridge East – West divide

In a letter to the Prime Minister, the cross-party group cites a new report which demonstrates stark social and economic inequalities between the Eastern and Western regions of the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.

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### **£210m world-class Life Sciences campus set for the West Midlands**

Birmingham is set to lead the delivery of medical innovation in the Midlands through the development of Birmingham Health Innovation Campus; attracting significant inward investment, creating high value jobs in the region, and accelerating the development and deployment of new drugs, diagnostics and healthcare technologies to patients.

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## **Mental Health and Covid-19: The Future**

The University of Nottingham's Institute for Policy and Engagement is partnering with the Institute for Mental Health for an online panel event (27th November, 12:00 start) about the impacts of COVID-19 on our mental and physical health, the wellbeing of the nation's workforce, and how the pandemic has required a new way of thinking to solve healthcare and technological problems.

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## **MICRA and Minerva join forces to support new spinouts**

Minerva Business Angels is working with MICRA – the Midlands Innovation Commercialisation of Research Accelerator — to attract more investment to the region’s university spinout companies with the launch of its Super Start-Up Club.

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## **FSB to host East Midlands MPs for Roundtable with local businesses**

The Federation of Small Businesses are hosting a roundtable between businesses and their local MP. Businesses in the Derbyshire Dales can speak to Sarah Dines MP on 30th November. The event is open to any SME as long they are based in the respective constituencies, or if business is based outside, and the owner(s) lives in it.

**Sign up for roundtable with Sarah Dines**



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

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