

Paper Number EB6.19.2.3

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Meeting & Date:	Midlands Engine Executive Board June 2019		
Subject:	Midlands Engine Strategy Refresh		
Attachments:	None		
Author:	Rowena Limb	Total no of sheets: (inc cover sheet)	3

Papers are provided for:	Approval	Discussion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information
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Summary & Recommendation:
<p>Summary</p> <p>This report sets out on behalf of Government how it would like to work with Midlands Engine regional partners on the Midlands Engine Strategy Refresh.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>To note the outline of the approach and to discuss how best be engaged with the process.</p>

Midlands Engine Strategy Refresh

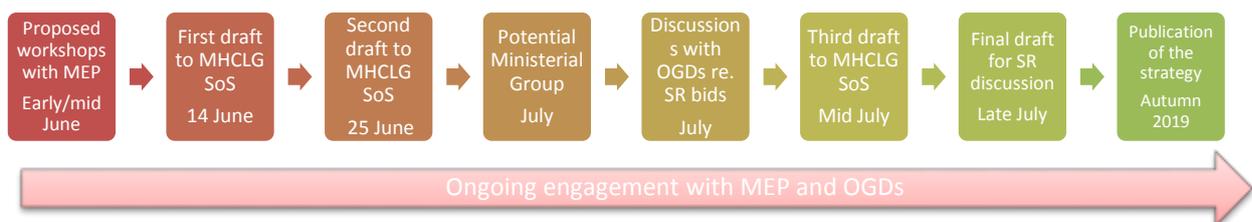
In Budget 2018, government committed to refreshing the Midlands Engine strategy in 2019. The strategy refresh will continue to focus on increasing the region's economic activity to reduce the productivity gap between the Midlands and the UK average, as well as making the region a better place to work and live. The focus will be on collaborative work areas and investments where we can deliver real impact across a large area, working in partnership. Whilst the strategy will be a government document, the Communities Secretary, as Midlands Engine Champion, is committed to working closely on developing the strategy with regional partners to enable a clear focus on the right areas and the delivery of the strategy.

Timeline

The intention is to publish the strategy close to the Spending Review anticipated later this year. The draft will be prepared to influence the SR considerations, so we need a near final draft in July, with opportunities for continued refinement in the weeks which follow. We are engaging with officials across government and with local partners to ensure relevant input to the strategy's development.

There is a Midlands Engine ministerial group who will want to consider the draft strategy. The Ministerial Champion wants to see drafts at certain points over the next few weeks as the deadline to inform Spending Review considerations approaches.

A timeline is below:



Engagement with the Midlands Engine Partnership

Ministers are keen for local partners to contribute to the vision and strategy. Sir John Peace and the Communities Secretary are working closely together which will help align the government and regional views as the strategy develops, their regular dialogue will continue as the strategy develops. Officials are working with the Partnership including theme groups, the Midlands Engine Economic Observatory and LEPs to ensure we build on the ideas, evidence and work that has already been completed. It is important that there is a good fit between published or developing Local Industrial Strategies and the refreshed Midlands Engine Strategy.

Government Priorities

Officials have developed an evidence base and used this to work across Whitehall, engaging officials and Ministers to establish a list of priorities for the strategy refresh. These will be set against a vision for the region's ambition and some exemplification of the things which are happening at the local level to drive that ambition.

The focus will be on areas where an impact can be made at a pan regional level. Initial areas for focus are:

Trade and Investment – Continuing, growing and maximising DIT trade and investment programmes including trade missions, export champions, FDI promotion through events such as MIPIM and developing Investment Portfolio opportunities. Funding to develop a business festival (expo), aligned with the Commonwealth Games.

Connectivity - maximising the opportunities at the new HS2 station sites at Toton and Birmingham Interchange. Picking up on initial work emerging from the Rail Hub and long-term sustainable growth in pan Midlands economic corridors by Midlands Connect. Augmenting the key logistics assets of the region. Developing and implementing a strategy to enable the Midlands to become a 5G region. Power capacity as a barrier to investment in commercial sites is also likely to be considered.

Supply chain and business growth – government actions to support supply chains, helping to internationalise the region's key sectors. Building on existing innovations strengths to drive a different approach to delivering world class innovation support, supporting Governments ambition to increase R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP. Consideration of how the Midlands Engine Investment Fund and skills can support in this area.

Growing the Midlands Engine voice – continuing to grow and develop the Midlands Engine strong regional identity is key. There is much already happening which will be built upon to promote the impact of the Midlands Engine, our economic growth ambitions and the value the Midlands has to offer as an excellent place to live, learn and work.