

# New Midlands Engine Champion Robert Jenrick backs the Midlands from the heart of government

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has today (1 August 2019) confirmed he will lead ambitious plans to level up prosperity across the Midlands as the new Ministerial Champion for the Midlands Engine.

A thriving Midlands is essential to a successful UK economy which is why the government is supporting the Midlands Engine Partnership to grow the Midlands economy and make the region an even better place to live, work, study and do business.

The government is developing a refreshed Midlands Engine strategy which will reaffirm the government's commitment to the Midlands and outline how the region can continue to build on its strengths.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

From growing up in Wolverhampton and Shropshire to proudly representing the people of Newark in Nottingham, the Midlands has made me who I am today so it's a huge honour to now champion this incredible region in Cabinet and across government.

The continued success of the Midlands is not just personal to me, it is absolutely vital to our mission to level up our regions, boost economic growth and ensure every city and town can benefit from the opportunities Brexit brings.

One of my first visits as Secretary of State was to Wolverhampton and I now look forward to working with Sir John Peace, as chair of the Midlands Engine Partnership, and everyone who shares my passion for the region and vision for a prosperous future for the whole Midlands at the heart of a thriving United Kingdom.

Sir John Peace, Chairman of the Midlands Engine Partnership, said:

I welcome the announcement that Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has been appointed as the Midlands Engine Champion. It is an important time for the Midlands Engine Partnership and for Midlanders as a whole.

Having a champion for the Midlands Engine who has a such a direct connection to our region will bring many benefits and working together we will ensure we make the most of the many opportunities ahead, for our communities.

I look forward to working with Robert over the coming months and beyond, ensuring the Midlands Engine partnership builds strongly on our recent achievements.

Government investment has already ensured the Midlands is leading the way on digital connectivity with a £50 million multi-city trial of 5G technology, paving the way for rollout across the UK.

And with Coventry named UK City of Culture for 2021 and Birmingham hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the Midlands is firmly on the national and international stage.

The Midlands is home to over 10 million people and has a £237 billion economy, generating over 13% of the UK's Gross Value Added. The Midlands Engine Partnership aim to close the GVA gap to match or exceed the national average by 2030.

The Midlands is home to over 815,900 businesses, 20 universities and 2 international airports and in 2017, the Midlands accounted for a 22.2% share of all of England's goods exports.

The government is investing £1.9 billion in Local Growth Funding across the Midlands.