



The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 0AA

5 September 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

What the West Midlands needs

First and foremost, congratulations on your election as Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Party and appointment as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, after what must have been a gruelling but yet ultimately rewarding month of campaigning.

Your premiership comes at a critical point in time for the nation and the Midlands. We are, of course, fully aware of the breadth of challenges that you will be facing from day one of your term in office, however we would urge you to ensure that the 'Levelling Up' agenda does not become a new addition to the political slogan scrapbook and the concept remains at the heart of your policy agenda.

We are sure that you share our view that a strong and buoyant Midlands is the engine for a successful Britain, particularly in a post Brexit and Covid environment. As the only independent, apolitical, not for profit think tank for the West Midlands, our sole focus at the Centre for the New Midlands is on the creation and promotion of new ideas to help shape a 'better' region.

In order to have a thriving and more prosperous West Midlands, we would urge you to prioritise the actions below (all of which are from across our immediate priority workstreams):

Housing and Communities – “We need affordable, high quality and energy-efficient housing in thriving, community driven neighbourhoods to address deprivation, the housing crisis and the climate emergency.

Actions:

- Investment in new affordable housing, with housing affordability mapped at a regional and local level, and targeted interventions in the housing market to ensure there are affordable and energy-efficient housing options of a high standard across all tenures
- Clear regulation of the non-commissioned exempt accommodation sector considering licensing for landlords, reviewing the funding model for supported housing, and granting local authority oversight on the provision and supply of supported housing to meet the needs of vulnerable tenants

Transport, Net Zero and Infrastructure – “The region needs an affordable roadmap to Net Zero that creates jobs and cuts carbon”

Actions:

- Invest in Industry: Fastrack and invest in Gigafactory in Coventry
- Invest in Public Transport: Birmingham to be the home of Great British Railways HQ



Digital – “The region needs access to direct funding schemes for its SMEs in the tech sector to enable digital adaptation and scalability towards productivity and innovation”

Actions:

- **Invest in Industry:** Introduce Midlands Tech funding programs, regional grants, and monetary incentives by diverting up to 5% of cash assets from the pension funds in the UK for SMEs in the tech sector (in alignment with US & European countries) to unlock the development of high-tech solutions to industrial challenges
- **Access to Digital Skills:** Provide skills support in business development and digital adaptation for SMEs in Midlands
- **Transform Public Procurement:** Open up the public sector for SMEs by simplifying procurement rules and eliminating barriers which prevent innovative digital solutions to be sold to local government

We wish you all the very best in your new role and look forward to meeting with you when you visit the West Midlands region. I am sure there will be plenty to discuss; particularly on the invaluable contribution of this region to the future prosperity of UK plc and the importance of driving up living standards across the whole of the region.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Smith
Founder and
Managing Director

Dr Halima Sacranie
Chair, Housing and
Communities Leadership
Board

Darren Jones
Chair, Transport, Net Zero
and Infrastructure
Leadership Board

Professor Ardavan Amini
Chair, Digital Leadership
Board