

# Delivering a Great Future

A Business Manifesto  
for Growth



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# Building a Competitive East Midlands

**The UK is at a pivotal moment in its history. In the face of uncertainty, businesses in the East Midlands will always look for the opportunity to succeed. To support them in this, it is essential that our elected representatives deliver the basics that businesses need to grow.**

East Midlands Chamber (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire) has 4,200 members. From small businesses through to multi-nationals, our members represent every business sector and range of business experiences in the East Midlands.

The Chamber has worked with its members to produce the following asks of Government and politicians in Westminster and the East Midlands.



**Connect us**



**Get the basics right**



**Realise our international ambitions**



**Boost our competitiveness**

We also believe that the East Midlands provides a significant and unique opportunity for delivering a step change in UK growth. This document sets out a vision for creating an ultra-high growth zone in the East Midlands and indicates the Government levers that will help make this a reality.



## Connect us

### **Invest in our infrastructure**

The East Midlands currently receives 60% of the national average in terms of infrastructure spend. Poor quality roads, rail, broadband and mobile and energy infrastructure is consistently the number one issue for members – both rural and urban. Government infrastructure spend in the region must be increased to 100% of the national average by 2020.

#### **Government must invest in our infrastructure by:**

- Ending the current lottery that surrounds broadband service levels and an approach to broadband delivery that disadvantages businesses, particularly those on business parks
- Tackling mobile connectivity, working with network operators and all other relevant stakeholders to eradicate the 'not spots' that exist across the UK, rolling out 5G technology nationally
- Improving our roads, tackling the increase in potholes and investing in new regional projects, prioritising improvements to the A46 and A5
- Electrifying the Midland Main Line and securing longer-term reliability and capacity gains that our business growth demands
- Investing in renewable energy production and incentivising lower carbon business activity, backing the clean technology businesses that are developing products and processes that will sell around the world.



## Get the basics right

### **Address the day-to-day barriers to business**

Decisions being made on the future of the UK's relationship with the EU will have a significant impact on the environment in which businesses operate. However, there are basic building blocks of economic success that have been ignored or misunderstood by successive Governments. Got right, these will give businesses in the East Midlands the chance to succeed regardless of the operating environment.

### **Government must address the day-to-day barriers that exist for business by:**

- Ensuring that education reform is driven by the realities of the labour market – ending the dogmatic focus on grade attainment and giving greater weight to employability activity
- Embedding opportunities to experience local workplaces throughout a child's time in school
- Delivering a transparent and predictable business rates system that incentivises investment and is based on ability to pay
- Changing the regulatory culture to one that supports and enables as opposed to hinders and penalises
- Giving teeth to the Small Business Commissioner to enable them to meaningfully tackle late payments and encourage more equitable public procurement practices.



## Realise our international ambitions

### Back a global East Midlands

It is businesses that trade, not governments, and it will be the ability of businesses to respond to changes and identify new opportunities that will shape the country's future relationship with the EU and the rest of the world. The East Midlands is home to global firms and communities. People, ideas and products from across the world move into and out of the region on a daily basis. This strength must be utilised.

### Government must secure a global East Midlands by:

- Placing real SME business experience at the heart of future agreements and deals with the EU and other countries
- Minimising all future tariff barriers – ensuring businesses continue to benefit from existing Free Trade Agreements and brokering new agreements with emerging markets
- Developing future customs and origin rules in partnership with businesses
- Ensuring businesses have continued access to the international talent they need
- Funding an expanded trade mission and trade fairs programme, specifically targeted at SME businesses
- Reducing Air Passenger Duty, backing new route development and getting the most out of existing capacity at regional airports.



## Boost our competitiveness

### **Shape business support to maximise supply-chain opportunities**

Linked to the many multinational manufacturers in the East Midlands, a wealth of smaller businesses operating within complex supply chains are based in the region. While at a macro-level Government policy focuses on closing the productivity gap, at a local level these businesses strive to win contracts by increasing competitiveness – focusing on quality, cost, relationships, reliability and a host of other attributes that they establish over the long term with their suppliers and customers.

### **Government must shape business support to maximise supply-chain skills and capacity by:**

- Emphasising the importance of diversification and innovation within current and future funding programmes, supporting supply-chains from the bottom up as well as encouraging support from the top down
- Further increasing the R&D and investment incentives to those businesses investing in products, machinery, plant and people
- Providing specific funding to enhance leadership and management skills within manufacturing and engineering SME businesses
- Giving early clarity around the shape and extent of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, ensuring evidence-based funding aligned with local industrial strategy priorities.

# The Big Opportunity

The East Midlands is among the fastest growing regions in the UK. The businesses based here innovate, make and move goods and services more effectively and efficiently than anywhere else in the country. The continued success of the East Midlands is not only integral in delivering the success of the Midlands Engine, but will also be central in ensuring a competitive UK economy for the long-term.



## Growth

In recent years, the region has not received the same levels of funding as other parts of the UK. The East Midlands therefore presents Government with a massive opportunity – with the right investment we can take our growth from good to great.

We believe that, with the right vision, we can build on our natural and business-led advantages to create a zone in the centre of the country that will spearhead national growth for years to come:



## The Vision

To create a zone of ultra-high growth in logistics and advanced manufacturing, hinged around East Midlands Airport – the largest pure freight airport in the country – and the adjacent East Midlands Gateway, a 700-acre logistics development. This zone would draw upon the talent in the surrounding three cities and counties and the expertise in our six universities. It would capitalise on having the M1 running through its centre, the Midland Main Line up its spine and the future development of the nearby HS2 East Midlands Hub station. It would utilise the existing land available for development at Toton and future significant brownfield sites in the area.



### Ask of Government:

- To build on announcements backing the creation of a delivery vehicle for the area, working proactively with ourselves, the wider private sector and our local partners in delivering an effective mechanism to enable joined-up planning decisions across the multiple local and LEP boundaries that this area covers
- To confirm phase 2b of HS2 as early as possible, bringing forward the date at which Toton becomes operational
- To hasten the development of a Manufacturing Zone in the East Midlands, ensuring that wherever this is located, it maximises the opportunities that exist around our area of ultra-high growth
- To commit to exploring the potential to designate a Free Trade Zone area linked to East Midlands Airport



### Our offer to Government and policy makers

We offer our experience and expertise to those developing the policy required to meet these asks and deliver on our big opportunity. As necessary, we will act as a critical friend, a champion and an informer of Government policy.

The Chamber's diverse membership is its biggest asset. We will continue to work with members to ensure the real life experience of East Midlands businesses continues to shape our asks and, ultimately, delivers the growth that will secure this country's long-term success.

# About East Midlands Chamber

(Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire)

**With a growing base of more than 4,200 businesses, the Chamber is the leading voice for business in the East Midlands.**

The Chamber's membership reflects the broad base of business sectors in the East Midlands, with specific strengths in the manufacturing and engineering, transport and logistics, construction and property and professional services sectors.

The Chamber works constructively with private and public sector partners across the Midlands Engine region, with a vision to enhance East Midlands businesses and the communities we serve.



Grow

Supporting Growth

Connect

Connecting You

Skills

Developing Skills

Influence

Helping You Influence

International

Enabling International Trade

Join

It makes business sense  
to join today

For further information about the Chamber's policy activities and East Midlands business insight, visit [www.emc-dnl.co.uk/helping-you-influence](http://www.emc-dnl.co.uk/helping-you-influence) or call the Policy team.



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