

MIDLANDS ENGINE OBSERVATORY ACADEMIC INSIGHTS

Priorities for Levelling Up



This is based on [this](#) article by Centre for Governance, Regulation and Industrial Strategy

Theme:

Levelling-up requires significant changes across the public and private sector to be successful

Area of Focus:

In order for levelling up to become more than a slogan, significant changes need to be made

Key Findings:

The UK has a higher level of regional inequality than other advanced nations. There are three inter-linked challenges and opportunities that could be prioritized to promote growth. These are the green transition, 'industry 4.0' and skills.

The green sectors are expected to grow by 11% per annum by 2030, reaching 1.18 million jobs by 2050. Many of these are expected to be in the North and other 'left behind' regions. But future progress will depend on investment. LEPs and Combined Authorities have started to give local coordinated direction. Public procurement and demonstrations of low carbon technology can also boost consumer confidence.

The adoption of advanced digital technologies as part of Industry 4.0 will play an enabling role across services and manufacturing. This will be disruptive but may open more producer-consumer collaboration. But for this to be possible, significant investment in digital and broadband infrastructure will be required. Public procurement should enable sharing and collaboration.

Skills will be critical to both changes for those in education and adult education. A Lifetime Skills Guarantee should provide adults with flexible finance to access new training throughout their lives. Work should be done to avoid a drain of skilled workers to employment hotspots. Training needs should also be identified.

Substantive public finance will be needed to reduce the UK wide and historic regional imbalances.



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Midlands Engine Impact:

- The Midlands has significant scope to contribute to all three of these projects, with green sector developments and investment being developed across the region. This includes public sector led investment like the West Midlands CABLED project, where local authorities trialed electric vehicles as a public service.
- Our LEPs and combined authorities, and local authorities are already producing green, digital, and skills plans. Coordinating these where possible would create added value for the region.
- There are rural and urban places across the Midlands Engine which have poor or low levels of digital connectivity. The emphasis on Levelling Up and digital could be used to drive investment into digital infrastructure in these areas.
- Training has already been identified as a need in the region, and therefore can be quickly supported.

For Further Information Contact:

Professor David Bailey
Department of Business Economics
Professor of Business Economics
Email d.g.bailey@bham.ac.uk
Telephone: +447981925713