

The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BT

Tuesday 17 June 2018

Dear Damian,

It is my pleasure to enclose a copy of the West Midlands Combined Authority's first Regional Skills Plan. This plan has been developed with a range of key stakeholders including Local Enterprise Partnerships, local businesses, local authorities and education and training providers.

The West Midlands is experiencing significant economic growth with the fastest growth in jobs in the UK. However, against this landscape of opportunity, we face real challenges around educational attainment, employment rates and skill levels. Shortages of the right skills at the right levels are impacting on the productivity of local businesses with two thirds of the gap between the West Midlands and the national GVA figure being attributed to employment and skills issues.

The development of the Regional Skills Plan has been built from the evidence base produced by the Combined Authority's Productivity & Skills Commission, chaired by Dr Andy Palmer, CEO and President of Aston Martin Lagonda and further complemented by extensive engagement with key stakeholders, businesses and stakeholder groups.

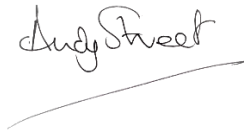
The Regional Skills Plan summarises the key priorities and vision for putting skills at the heart of our drive for improving productivity and securing inclusive growth, a vision that is shared jointly with businesses, local politicians, and the wider education system:

- Preparing our young people for future life and work
- Creating regional networks of specialist, technical education and training to drive up skills and productivity and underpin economic growth
- Accelerating the take-up of good quality Apprenticeships, across the region - doubling the number of apprenticeships by 2030
- Delivering inclusive growth by giving more people the skills to get and sustain good jobs and careers
- Strengthening collaboration between partners to support achieving more collectively

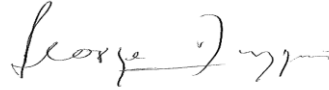
The Plan is deliberately focused on actions – delivering on the opportunities that devolution is bringing to the region and what the WMCA, along with local and national stakeholders, will do to improve the regional skills base. The organisations listed below were all involved in shaping the plan and will continue to be involved as we translate it into action on the ground.

We look forward to continuing the productive and close working with your department to maximise the impact of the delivery of this plan for local people, ensuring that the West Midlands is a region where access to opportunity is available to all.

Yours sincerely



Andy Street  
Mayor of the West Midlands



CLr George Duggins  
WMCA Portfolio Lead, Productivity & Skills  
Leader Coventry City Council

**Co-signatories**



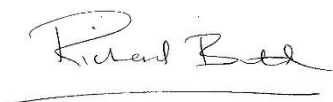
Paul Faulkner  
CEO, Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce



Corin Crane  
Chief Executive, Black Country Chamber of Commerce



Louise Bennett  
Chief Executive, Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce



Richard Butler  
Director, West Midlands & Oxfordshire, CBI

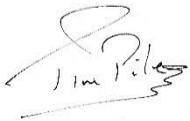




Calum Nisbet  
Regional Director, IOD West Midlands



Ian O'Donnell  
Non Operational Director, Federation of Small Businesses



Tim Pile  
Chair, Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership



Stewart Towe  
Chair, Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership



Jonathan Browning  
Chair, Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership



Andy Palmer  
President and Chief Executive Officer, Aston Martin Lagonda  
Chair, West Midlands Productivity & Skills Commission



ASTON MARTIN

Jose Lopes  
Head of Technical Excellence, Jaguar Land Rover



David Danger  
Chairman, Midlands Aerospace Alliance



Tom Westley  
Chairman, Westley Plastics Ltd



Sarah Fenton  
Partnerships Director, Midlands & North



Lowell Williams  
Chair, West Midlands FE Skills & Productivity Group



Professor Alec Cameron  
Chair, Universities West Midlands



Lee Barron  
Regional Secretary, TUC Midlands



Andy Taylor  
Regional Coordinating Officer, Unite the Union

