Executive Summary

The West Midlands is a global force and a major part of the UK economy, generating £92bn or around 6% of total UK output. We are growing fast. Output is up by 23.5% over the past five years and we have a record number of people in work. This is a resilient economy in renaissance.

Our cities and towns have long been centres of innovation and production, generating new ideas, goods and techniques. The home of the first global industrial revolution is now the location of globally competitive and innovative clusters and supply chains in automotive and mobility, life sciences, creative and gaming and business and professional services. The West Midlands is a renowned centre of mobility innovation, leading the way globally in electric and autonomous vehicles of all kinds, digital and light rail and the use of data that underpins integrated transport systems.

We are consulting now as part of developing our West Midlands Industrial Strategy that will guide our investment and action in the years ahead. We have made substantial progress on the goals we set in 2016, but there is more to do so our businesses and people can meet their full potential. We have a track record of delivery and a very substantial opportunity through significant planned investment in the years ahead.

We have developed a robust evidence base through independent studies and commissions. Our evidence base covers the drivers of our economy with a detailed understanding of our businesses, sectors and supply chains.

Our overall vision is to drive economic growth in a way that enables a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous population. We are determined to drive growth that is inclusive, opening up opportunities and improved health and wellbeing for all our communities.

We are proposing ten commitments which will guide the work of public, private and voluntary partners:

1. High employment, with more good jobs and accessible opportunities, and diverse leadership in business and public life
2. A high quality and responsive regional skills system
3. Being known for the improvements we make to our natural environment, and a choice of high-quality housing
4. A pre-eminent national creative & media cluster
5. Being the home of future mobility and transport innovation in the UK
6. Three globally and nationally-connected cities, where every part of the West Midlands is close to the rest of the world
7. The UK's leading exporting region with strong demand-led innovation support – where businesses and people come to develop and build new products, processes and services
8. The UK centre for health diagnostics, devices and testing and translational medicine, based on our unique population and driven by big data and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

9. A globally renowned 21st century advanced manufacturing and engineering centre
10. Innovative and successful new approaches to energy generation, storage and transmission and clean growth

We have set out the detailed actions needed to deliver these commitments, through improving connectivity and opportunity, supporting supply chains and building on our competitive advantages.

Many of these commitments and the actions in this strategy are already underway and build on existing investment, devolution agreements and agreed priorities. Others are further in the future. A successful Industrial Strategy will be uniquely of the West Midlands, building on our existing and emerging strengths to unlock potential and maximise the impact of major opportunities such as HS2, the Commonwealth Games and City of Culture.

This strategy is focussed on the area covered by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Coventry and Warwickshire and Black Country Local Enterprise Partnerships. But as well as global and national markets our economy is deeply connected to neighbouring places, including the M54 growth corridor and the wider Midlands Engine, for example. We will continue to work closely with all constituent and non-constituent members of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and other partners over the upcoming months and years.

This informal consultation phase runs until 15 November 2018. Please respond to the questions in this document or get involved through one of the many events that partners are running in the weeks ahead.