

Open Letter – Candidates and political parties in West Midlands

The forthcoming West Midlands Mayoral Election on Thursday 6 May takes place at a crucial time, as we emerge from the pandemic and need to deliver economic growth that is socially inclusive and compatible with net zero.

ACE members in the West Midlands are the engineering consultancies large and small who design and engineer every piece of social and economic infrastructure: schools, hospitals, commercial buildings and transport schemes, to name but a few. Throughout this pandemic, ACE members in the West Midlands and the wider construction industry have helped keep the economy moving.

Whoever is elected on Thursday we want to work with the next Mayor to make sure that our built environment is fit for purpose: resilient to existing climate change, ready for net zero, and adding value and a sense of place to our communities. In particular we would urge the next administration to:

Investment in infrastructure:

- Level up all parts of the region with investment that contributes to economic recovery.
- Invest in infrastructure designed to achieve net zero.
- Deliver more engineers and environmental specialists by championing skills and commit to policies that promote apprenticeship schemes, community engagement and social value initiatives that get people back into work.

Urban regeneration:

- Bring forward policies that encourage people back into urban centres.
- Encourage, as part of a low carbon option, the refurbishment and extension of empty offices which has the ability to attract developers and investors.
- Boost active travel in urban centres by reducing barriers to use, such as more designated cycle lanes.

Better procurement:

- Ensure fair and open procurement to deliver the above that encourages firms to invest locally and gives opportunities to SMEs.

The coming decade will be decisive in addressing these challenges, in particular net zero. We look forward to working with the next Mayor to ensure we meet these challenges.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. M. Jeffs', written in a cursive style.

Ruth Jeffs

ACE West Midlands Chair
& Regional Director at Waterman Group