

£18.2m investment puts Midlands firmly on the map for advanced ceramics

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Thousands of jobs are set to be created in the Midlands after the region's bid to become a world leader in advanced ceramics received a significant cash boost.

The [Midlands Industrial Ceramics Group \(MICG\)](#) has secured £18.27 million in government funding provided through UK Research and Innovation's flagship Strength in Places Fund (SIPF).

The funds will be used to create a world-leading industrial and academic research and development programme over the next four years, creating a cluster of new businesses in the Midlands and strengthening the supply chain in the region.

The SIPF funding, combined with partner investment and the creation of new business opportunities, will together make the programme a £42.1 million project.

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Formed by some of the area's largest businesses and universities, the MICG was launched in 2020 to deliver a

world-leading approach to advanced ceramics.

It is made up of blue-chip companies and SMEs including Rolls-Royce, [JCB](#), Morgan Advanced Materials and [Lucideon](#) – as well as the universities of Birmingham, Leicester and Loughborough.

MICG chair Ian Edmonds, of Rolls-Royce, said: “This is great news for the Midlands. Advanced ceramics are often unseen but vital components of jet engines, electronics, medical devices, car batteries, other energy technologies and many more manufactured products.

“They allow products to operate at higher temperatures, in more challenging environments and can last longer than plastic or metal equivalents.

“Globally, the advanced ceramics sector is projected to be worth £143 billion by 2023, and the outcome of this funding means the Midlands is well-placed to be part of it.”

The Strength in Places Fund is a competitive funding scheme that takes a place-based approach to research and innovation funding, to support significant local economic growth.



The MICG is proposing to build an Advanced Ceramics Campus in North Staffordshire.

Professor Jon Binner, of the University of Birmingham and the President of the European Ceramic Society, said: “As a result of our history in ceramics that goes back centuries, and an extensive manufacturing base, the Midlands hosts the UK’s largest cluster of both users and producers of advanced ceramics.

“This SIPF investment will form part of a co-ordinated effort to grow the whole advanced ceramics supply chain in the Midlands, maximising the UK’s ability to compete more effectively in this global market.”

The successful outcome of the SIPF funding is also set to unlock further investment from MICG’s partners.

This includes opening up opportunities for the next stage of the development – a 130,000 sq ft Advanced Ceramics Campus –

proposed for North Staffordshire.

The development will make the scheme an £80 million plus project in total, which will ultimately contribute towards the growth of 4,200 jobs in the region over the next decade.

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Tony Kinsella, chief executive of Penkhull-based Lucideon, said: “We are absolutely delighted to achieve the funding from UKRI.

“It will create many exciting opportunities in research and development across the Midlands. Crucially, it also opens up opportunities to attract further public and private sector funding for the Advanced Ceramics Campus.

“This facility will provide an important hub for industry, offering a centre of excellence for research and development, as well as underpinning academic research.

“It will create an environment for business and academia to share knowledge and collaborate on research and development, safeguarding existing jobs and allowing existing companies to expand, as well as providing opportunities for new start-ups.

“If funded, the campus will also have knock-on benefits across the Midlands, with innovation improving productivity and competitiveness in manufacturing, helping to ‘level up’ the region’s economy and create new efficiencies to drive down emissions.”

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