

→ Continued from page 5

live, work and do business in is kept at the forefront.”

However, he believes that Government could make life easier for the sector by recognising its technological value to the country.

Jim said: “On a national level, many of the gaming sector’s needs are held in common with other sectors – physical and digital infrastructure and cyber-resilience, skills, supportive business environment, and supportive regulatory and tax environment.

“But I’d love to see more forthright championing of the sector as exemplifying the new generation of UK industry – flexible, highly-skilled companies combining knowledge and creative sector strengths to create intellectual property with global reach and value.

“This is clearly a national story – there are very few barriers to the knowledge and creative sectors being a strength right across the UK.”

Jim’s background is in mathematics and teaching. He joined Rare 15 years ago as a software engineer.

He said: “It was my first job in gaming, and after three life-changing years in teaching I saw video games in general and Rare in particular as the best fit between my training as a mathematician and coder, my passion for the medium, and my wish

It’s no longer enough just to put some good content on a disc. We have to continually adapt our products Jim Horth

to be part of something with a creative, cultural output.

“Currently I’m the person in the business responsible for figuring out how we adapt to a continuous always-on business cycle, establishing functions from player support, business intelligence, online engineering and live incident response for when things don’t go smoothly.

“It’s no longer enough just to put some good content on a disc and move on to the next thing.

“We’ve got to continually monitor, change and adapt our products, deal with live customer sentiment and balance what we think is right with what our audience demands.

“And we’re doing that with a global audience who don’t sleep when we do.”

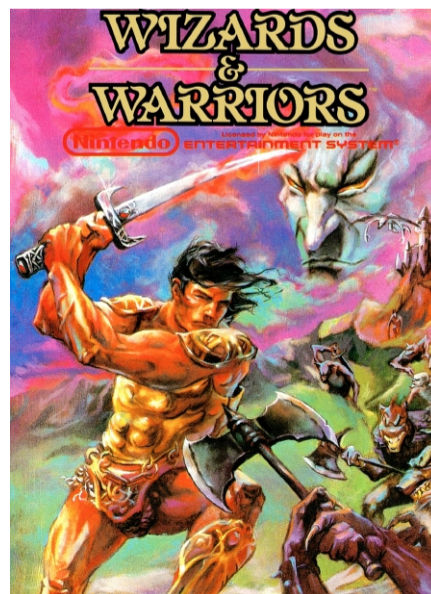
For Rare it’s obviously working. The business has a trophy cabinet full of awards, including two Baftas for its multi-million-selling Kinect Sports series.

Meanwhile, the team has high hopes for Sea of Thieves which is already getting an enthusiastic response from insiders and early fans.

If it matches expectations, there’ll be plenty of celebrating in sleepy Twycross.



GAME ON: Rare won two Baftas for its for its multi-million-selling Kinect Sports series, above, and also created many successful titles for Nintendo including Perfect Dark, Donkey Kong Country, Wizards and Warriors, and Battletoads



CANCELLED: The Midland Mainline will no longer be electrified

More investment is vital to unlock economic growth and prosperity

The East Midlands has the lowest spend per head in relation to infrastructure of any region in the United Kingdom. There is a desperate need to improve infrastructure and connectivity.

There will be major opportunities if we get this right, and significant barriers to trade if we do not.

The Midlands Engine Debate continues.

There is a concern that the voice from West Midlands is so much stronger.

What do we need, therefore, to achieve, to be heard and to correct the significant history of under-investment in Leicestershire and in the East Midlands.

The most recent HM Treasury report confirms our region is losing out in terms of public investment.

It has the lowest level of public expenditure on ‘economic affairs’, and the lowest level of public expenditure on transport, in total and per head.

It has the lowest level of public expenditure on rail per head.

In addition, the East Midlands is within the third lowest regions in terms of expenditure on health care, on education, and on services generally.

Our productivity within the region falls

The East Midlands’ voice needs to be heard if spending on infrastructure is to be increased, argues Jane Cowley

Jane Cowley

below the national average, and following the recent cancellation of Midland Mainline rail electrification plans, we are in danger of believing we are the Cinderella of UK regions.

In contrast, our region is one of the fastest-growing economies outside the South East, produces 21 per cent of UK manufacturing output, has the second largest airport dealing with freight in the UK, in East Midlands Airport, and is at the heart of the transport network in the UK, and therefore the heart of the logistics sector.

We have so much potential. We have

three world class universities. Our region offers quality of housing and lifestyle which is second to none, with beautiful greenspaces.

The Midlands is the largest economic area outside London, accounting for 18 per cent of the UK population and manufacturing output. We are at the centre of pioneering science research, and have a competitive advantage given our low cost base.

A third of heavy freight vehicles travel through our region.

The Chamber of Commerce latest quarterly economic survey demonstrates the resilience of the East Midlands area.

Surely our priority must be therefore for investment to unlock economic growth and prosperity.

So what do we need? Cohesion and leadership.

It is essential that we speak with one voice and clearly articulate the reasons why investment in our region will produce return.

Investment in our infrastructure is desperately needed, if we

are to unlock our competitive advantage. Investment to date, including motorway upgrades and smart motorways, have largely been focused on the West Midlands.

Within the Midlands Engine we must have a clear and consistent voice.

Private and public sector must come together to bridge the gap.

We need to fill the skills gap and increase the skills pool looking to local, regional and national infrastructure which must lead to an improvement in productivity.

We need to be vocal in that we are open for business and if we succeed, the UK succeeds. Local, national and global businesses must connect, setting politics aside, to market ourselves.

We must call our decision-makers to account, and explain to them that we are not so easily overlooked when investment decisions are made, and have an effective and uniform approach underpinned by robust business argument, and real deliverables, to realise the economic potential of this region, and deliver jobs, homes and prosperity that we in the East Midlands wish to see.

■ Jane Cowley, left, chairs Leicestershire Business Voice and is a partner at Gateley law firm.

