Welcome to the West Midlands: Automotive
The West Midlands. The place to create, innovate and build the future. A region where long-term, inclusive growth is driven by strong leadership, responsible investment, world-class businesses and talented people.

The West Midlands is the UK’s new growth capital, with a regional economy that is growing faster than anywhere else in the country. Outside London and the South East, it is the strongest performing region for business births, FDI and exports. This region is experiencing the most significant, modern day economic renaissance in a generation.

There has never been a more exciting time to make your mark in the West Midlands.
The West Midlands: At a glance

Talent
• Nine universities, including two in the World’s Top 100, producing 55,885 graduates a year
• Most popular UK destination for relocating Londoners
• Home to one of Europe’s youngest populations, with 1.3 million residents under 25

Leading clusters
• Number one UK region outside London for attracting FDI and creating FDI employment
• Largest regional Financial and Professional Services sector in the UK
• More people employed in the Advanced Engineering and Automotive sectors, than anywhere else in the UK.
• 25% of the UK Aerospace sector is based in the Midlands region
• 130 gaming companies in Silicon Spa

Connectivity
• 90% of the UK’s population within four hours of the region
• £5.1bn is being invested in High Speed 2 rail and local public transport

Lifestyle
• Region will host both the Commonwealth Games in 2022 and City of Culture in 2021
• The National Exhibition Centre near Birmingham’s international airport is the UK’s top exhibition venue
• Average home 60% cheaper than London
Young, diverse talent

The West Midlands is brimming with diverse talent that is driving the region forward as the UK’s new growth capital.

The region is home to one of the youngest populations in Europe, with 32% under the age of 25. Its diverse community, comprising of 190 nationalities, underpins a region with a truly global outlook that is both economically competitive and rich in cultural variety.

This vibrant population is continually boosted by waves of migration out of London, with more young professionals moving from the capital to Birmingham, than in the other direction.

A world-class education system sustains this ambitious talent. West Midlands universities educate 160,000 students and produce more than 55,000 graduates each year. Working closely with business and industry, their individual research and innovation specialisms combine to secure the region’s economic future.

Globally recognised business schools at Birmingham, Aston and Warwick, have more business students than any other location outside London and the South East, whilst Coventry University has more business and administrative students than any other UK university.

The region’s pioneering spirit has shaped a new generation of entrepreneurs that are shaping future markets. As a result, Birmingham has retained its position as the UK’s number one regional destination for start-ups for five consecutive years.

A region of doers and achievers, our people are our success stories.
Cutting-edge business clusters

Historically known as the ‘workshop of the world’, today the West Midlands’ diverse range of thriving sectors and entrepreneurial spirit continue to drive global innovation and change.

A unique mix of talented people, world-class research, business and government investment has seen the West Midlands transition from an industrial heartland to a thriving economy that is underpinned by tech-centred innovation.

Today, its world-class businesses, R&D centres and talented people are positioning the region to lead a new kind of modern-day industrial revolution. The West Midlands is now shaping industries of the future such as smart mobility, connected autonomous vehicles, modern business services, data-driven healthcare and energy storage.

With more patents for low carbon transport than anywhere else in Europe, the region is a global centre for future transport systems and supply chain firms.

Our uniquely high concentration of games development companies, with around 130 in a cluster known as Silicon Spa, are pioneering the digital age of augmented and virtual reality, while the development of advanced materials, bioenergy, finTech, future power systems and autonomous vehicles will continue to shape the future.

The West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy will act as a catalyst for these sectors, supporting four key areas of the local economy:

- smart mobility
- data-driven health and life sciences
- modern services
- creative content, techniques and technologies
Tech-led innovation

The West Midlands’ economy is deeply rooted in innovation. Today a golden thread of technology has positioned the region as a leader in industries of the future.

The West Midlands has been selected to become the innovative home of the UK’s first multi-city 5G test bed.

The region is already home to the UK’s most entrepreneurial city, and now businesses – both domestic and foreign – have a unique opportunity to capitalise on a project that’s the first of its kind globally.

The multi-million pound trial will pave the way for the future rollout of 5G across the UK, making the West Midlands the first region in the UK ready to trial new 5G applications and services at scale.

The region will have greater capacity to handle next-generation innovations, with Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, medical and emergency services, construction and industry 4.0 forming the basis of the first 5G testbeds of the region.

The testbeds will compliment the region’s growth sectors, as outlined in the West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy.

The region is home to a notable tech cluster, with over 65,000 people working in 12,500 tech and digital businesses – the largest regional cluster in the UK.

Leamington Spa, dubbed as ‘Silicon Spa’, alone accounts for more than 10% of the UK’s total gaming jobs. The West Midlands is also home to more medTech companies than any other UK region, a rapidly growing finTech cluster and as the UK’s centre of transport innovation, will become the country’s first Future Mobility Zone.
UK’s centrally connected region

Connectivity is king in the global economy. At the heart of the UK, the West Midlands is the best connected city-region in the country – by air, road and rail.

The West Midlands is one of the most dynamic areas in the UK. Located at the centre of a connected transport network, it has close proximity to London and 90% of the UK population lives within a four hour drive time.

Served by Birmingham Airport, the UK’s fastest-growing airport, local connectivity is being enhanced by a £5.1 billion investment to expand rail, tram and bus rapid transit systems.

HS2

The region’s connectivity and economic landscape will be transformed by High Speed 2 (HS2) - the country’s new high speed rail network and Europe’s largest infrastructure project. HS2 will increase capacity and bring people and goods to and from London within 38 minutes.

It will provide even quicker rail connections to Heathrow Airport and continental Europe, as well as to regional hubs in the north of England and Scotland. Manchester, Leeds and London will all be within an hour of the region.

The West Midlands Combined Authority’s HS2 Growth Strategy contains approximately £1.2 billion of transport connectivity investment to be delivered by 2026, that will improve the wider transport network.
Vibrant quality of life

Close to London, but without the stress, hassle and expense of the capital, the West Midlands offers a vibrant leisure scene and a high quality of life that makes it the most popular place in the UK for the country’s relocating residents.

Bustling urban centres, quiet green suburbs or wide open spaces, the West Midlands offers a vast range of lifestyle choices alongside easily accessible attractions and expanding cultural offerings.

The region’s quality of life is drawing in more people than ever before, with more UK residents relocating to the West Midlands than any other regional area. Birmingham is a net importer of talent from London, with more people moving from the capital city to Birmingham than in the other direction.

Recent years have seen a renaissance across the West Midlands’ diverse urban centres.

Coventry is set to become the UK’s 2021 City of Culture, and Birmingham will host the 2022 Commonwealth Games, putting the region in the global spotlight. Meanwhile, Wolverhampton is buzzing as its football club challenges the very best in the Premier League.

The West Midlands offers many of the UK’s best schools, high levels of personal safety, and a wealth of green spaces.

Once the trailblazing arteries of the Industrial Revolution, the region is home to more than 300 miles of canals.

This scenic landscape combined with vast career opportunities, has resulted in the West Midlands becoming the UK destination of choice for businesses, giving their employees a great place to live and work.
Sector expertise in Automotive
World-class supply chain

Home to more than 430 specialist automotive firms, including 36 of the top 50 global suppliers, the West Midlands is an internationally significant industry hub.

40% of all cars exported from the UK are made in the West Midlands.

A number of the industry’s leading brands are based in the region, including:

- **Jaguar Land Rover** has a long-established heritage in the region, with multiple operations in Solihull, Wolverhampton, Coventry and Warwickshire. The company is accelerating electric vehicle production in the UK, investing in its existing plant at Castle Bromwich to build a range of new electric-powered vehicles.

- **Aston Martin Lagonda** has its Global Headquarters in Gaydon, Warwickshire, where the company plans, designs and builds its cars for global distribution.

- **BMW Group’s** Hams Hall plant near Birmingham employs more than 1,000 people and produces the latest generation of TwinPower Turbo petrol engines, with more than one engine per minute rolling off its production line.

- **Tata Motors’** European Technical Centre (TMETC) is a hub of automotive design and engineering excellence. Based at the National Automotive Innovation Centre in Coventry, the facility provides R&D services principally for Tata Motors, as well as selective automotive partners.

- Chinese-owned **Geely Auto Group** has its state-of-the-art UK design and innovation centre in Coventry. Its subsidiary company, the **London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC)**, is also based in the city and is where its flagship electric London black cab and commercial vans are manufactured.

- **Changan** – one of China’s leading automotive manufacturers – has its UK R&D Centre located in Solihull. Dedicated to powertrain design and development, the company also has its own test facility located in the region.
Talent Pipeline

Home to 30% of the UK’s total sector employment, the West Midlands continues to be a hotbed of up and coming talent.

15,000 students each year follow courses in technology and engineering subjects.

Of the 55,000 graduates produced each year by the nine universities in the West Midlands, 30% are qualified in engineering, technology, science and maths related subjects.

The region’s Automotive Skills Plan, led by the West Midlands Combined Authority, ensures businesses in the local supply chain remain competitive for the industry of the future by offering provisions for upskilling and reskilling local talent.

A number of dedicated training facilities also work to inspire the region’s next generation of manufacturers and engineers.

The £36m Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre is a leading facility for advanced apprenticeship programmes. Named as one of the UK’s top 100 apprentice employers, trainees learn about the latest technology and have the opportunity to test and develop their skills while undertaking industry-sponsored placements.

Warwick Manufacturing Group’s Degree Apprenticeship Centre – part of the University of Warwick – is a £10 million facility for courses vital to advanced engineering and manufacturing companies. Set to open in 2019, the Centre will provide training programmes up to Level 7 (Master’s Degree level) with an initial capacity for 1,000 students.
Local specialisms

The West Midlands is fast-becoming a specialist in emerging future mobility technologies.

Selected as the UK’s first multi-city testbed for 5G technology, the region is well-placed to facilitate the next generation of transport solutions.

The region has also been chosen as the UK’s first Future Mobility Zone – a national programme to support the transition from technology R&D towards integration in everyday life.

Industry specialisms include:

**Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAV)**

The region is a leading destination for CAV technology trials. A wide range of tests have taken place to date, including the UK’s first multi-OEM self-driving vehicle in Coventry city centre; Jaguar Land Rover’s fully self-driving navigation around Coventry ring-road; freight vehicle communication with traffic signals in Birmingham to minimise unnecessary emissions through excessive acceleration and braking; and last-mile slow speed pods at various locations.

**Battery propulsion**

Home to the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre, part of the UK Government’s Faraday Battery Challenge, the West Midlands is leading national aspirations for large-scale battery manufacturing development. Secured through a public-private sector partnership between Coventry City Council, Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and Warwick Manufacturing Group at the University of Warwick, the Centre will advance the ambitions of automotive companies in the local and national supply chain for high volume electric vehicle production.
Centres of excellence

The West Midlands is a global centre of automotive R&D, with a number of world-class institutions leading vital industry innovations.

The Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC), located at the University of Warwick, is a joint venture between the UK Government and the automotive industry, born out of the UK Automotive Council’s ambitions for the sector. The APC works with businesses of all sizes to help them develop and bring low-carbon technology products to market.

Warwick Manufacturing Group’s National Automotive Innovation Centre – part of the University of Warwick – is the largest of its kind in Europe and the product of a partnership with Jaguar Land Rover and Tata Motors. The Centre combines expertise from industry, university academics and supply chain companies to support advances in low-carbon technology and reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

Coventry University’s National Transport Design Centre investigates influences on future vehicle design to create safe and sustainable transport solutions fit for the cities of the future, as well as exploring new ways of using existing equipment.

The Centre for Connected & Autonomous Automotive Research is a partnership between HORIBA MIRA and Coventry University. Situated at the MIRA Technology Park, the Centre is dedicated to developing intelligent, connected vehicle technology to address future transport needs, and has supported some of the UK’s most high-profile CAV projects, including Trusted Autonomous Parking (Park-IT) – an initiative to test highly-automated vehicles in real-world parking solutions.
Here to help

The West Midlands Growth Company exists to support inward investment into the region, creating new jobs and opportunities for its population. Our experienced team offers a comprehensive package of support, from helping to shape a business case for expansion, to raising the profile of companies locating here.

With links to property agents, recruitment consultants, public agencies and universities, the West Midlands Growth Company helps businesses establish their operations in the region with ease. Whether the task is finding the right location, helping to source staff, or connecting with leading academic and research institutions, our team is dedicated to helping new businesses settle and thrive in the West Midlands.

Our services, include:

• Research and Intelligence on the local labour market
• A local premises search according to your brief
• Help to attract and recruit the right staff
• A dedicated relocation team to help with the move to the West Midlands
• Familiarisation events to introduce incoming staff to the city
• Introductions to a network of around 250 commercial partners such as HSBC and HS2
• Signposting to private finance and public funding streams
• An in-house PR and communications team to raise your profile within the region and beyond

If you’d like to discuss how we can help with your business location or expansion requirements, please get in touch:

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