

## **Manufacturing Technology Centre – Ansty Park, Coventry**

Manufacturing is strategically important for the economies of the Midlands and the UK accounting for c. 75% of all R&D spend, it is a key driver for innovation and increased productivity, leading to increased GVA. It is a sector that is transforming and reflects the need for manufacturers to move up the value-added chain and embrace more knowledge-intensive, higher-skilled manufacturing to compete more on quality and less on price.

The focus of the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) is to facilitate step changes in manufacturing performance. It will provide facilities and skills to support industrial companies and their supply chains to bring about major improvements in manufacturing competitiveness by leveraging university-derived research and developing it to the point where it can be transferred rapidly into an industrial environment. It will be operated by a partnership made up initially of four leading UK research organisations: University of Birmingham, University of Nottingham, Loughborough University, and TWI Limited – the operating division of The Welding Institute. Founder industrial members of the MTC are Rolls-Royce, Jaguar Land Rover, Aero Engine Controls and Airbus UK.

The MTC will provide a complementary node to an expanding UK network of advanced manufacturing centres.

The principle behind such centres is to bridge the gap between academic research and commercial production, to meet the needs and requirements of industry. The UK has historically under-invested in both manufacturing equipment and manufacturing technology.

It has often found it difficult to realise the full benefits of technology, despite having a very strong research base. The aim of the MTC therefore, is to provide a high quality environment for the development and demonstration of new technologies, using equipment on an industrial scale, thereby ensuring fully capable processes are transferred at minimal risk.

Key facts:

- RDA investment in the project will return £46 for every £1 invested. In addition, over 10 years, the MTC will create/safeguard 2,100 jobs, support 625 businesses, and generate additional sales of c. £5.5bn.
- MTC represents a £130m investment over 10 years.
- It will be housed in a purpose-built 12,000 sq m facility.
- It will eventually employ 100-150 highly skilled staff.
- The Midlands RDAs have agreed to a £40.55m capital grant for the MTC, which will produce an estimated GVA of c £1.8bn over 10 years.

### **Building regional infrastructure – New Street Station**

The £600 million New Street Station project is set to deliver a bigger, better and brighter station for the 40 million passengers who use it each year.

The project will also act as a trigger for further physical regeneration in that part of the city, transforming the area into a visitor landmark for Birmingham.

Advantage West Midlands' £100 million funding contribution is the largest investment in a single project by any Regional Development Agency in the country.

Working in partnership with Network Rail, Birmingham City Council and Centro, Advantage West Midlands anticipates the project will generate more than £2 billion in transport and wider economic benefits for the region and lead to the creation of more than 10,000 jobs.

### **Connecting need and opportunity – Longbridge**

140 acre site of the former MG Rover car plant in Longbridge is one of the biggest and most ambitious redevelopment projects in the West Midlands region.

The Longbridge Area Action Plan (LAAP) will lead to the creation of 10,000 new jobs and at least 1,450 homes over 15 years.

The LAAP was prepared jointly by Birmingham City and Bromsgrove District Councils in partnership with Advantage West Midlands, St Modwen and Worcestershire County Council.

Work has started on building a new £84 million campus for Bournville College, which will have a capacity for 15,000 students and feature state-of-the-art facilities including a learning resource centre, business school, construction workshop and leisure and sport facilities.

The new college is expected to open in 2011.

The £20 million Longbridge Innovation Centre for hi-tech companies was the first new building, which opened in 2007, and is now almost 80 per cent full.

### **Securing new investment – regional infrastructure fund**

The Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) was launched by Advantage West Midlands in 2008 with an initial budget of £12 million.

Further augmented by £28 million from the Department for Transport, the Fund is designed to help provide the critical early infrastructure, such as road, rail, energy, water, and broadband, which is required to unlock the development of key sites.

A key principle of the Fund is that monies committed to projects are recovered later and returned into the Fund enabling further investment to be made.

Furthermore, as the RIF is based on Advantage West Midlands' own project appraisal process, schemes can be considered and approved within three to six months – much faster than the existing DfT process, which can take up to 5 years for major schemes.

The RIF is currently supporting a number of projects. This includes the redevelopment of Wolverhampton Bus Station, which will also unlock the potential of up two development sites in the City Centre; and a number of improvements to the region's rail freight network that will allow high cubed freight containers to be shipped from Southampton to the West Midlands.

### **Embracing new technologies – low carbon opportunities**

To build a stronger and more diverse West Midlands economy, Advantage West Midlands is supporting a broad range of measures to help businesses innovate and enter new growth markets.

Key projects include:

- a £77 million investment in Birmingham Science City to improve collaboration between Universities and businesses in the areas of energy, advanced materials, and translational medicine;
- a £19 million investment in the Low Carbon Vehicles Technology (LCVT) programme, which will help supply chain companies innovate their battery, motor and aerodynamic technologies. The region has also been designated as a Low Carbon Economic Area for Advanced Automotive Engineering, which will help it to establish a market lead in the global development and production of low carbon vehicles; and
- we have also successfully bid to the European Institute of Innovation and Technology to create the Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) on climate change - a unique consortium of regions, universities and international businesses.

KIC will oversee research into climate science, low carbon and environmental management to help develop related new markets and business opportunities.

### **Leading responses to economic shocks – West Midlands Taskforce**

Established to co-ordinate the region's response to the recession, the West Midlands Taskforce, led by Advantage West Midlands, worked to minimise its impact on our region's businesses and communities.

In addition to improving support available in the region, the Taskforce quickly launched a West Midlands 'support is available' campaign.

Linked to Government's Real Help Now initiative, the campaign incorporated a new website [supportwm.co.uk](http://supportwm.co.uk) (which has received over 90,000 hits since its launch) directing regional businesses and individuals to relevant national and regional sources of support.

### **Addressing the skills challenge – graduate internship programme**

The West Midlands Graduate Internship programme is a pilot scheme helping businesses in the West Midlands to access graduate level skills and knowledge, boosting performance in the workplace while providing unemployed graduates with vital experience of work.

Part-funded by Advantage West Midlands, the service is providing 500 funded internship places, enabling more employers to offer placements and adding to existing placement and support services.

Project delivery partners include the regional Institute of Directors, Jobcentre Plus, the region's universities and Graduate Advantage (the regional placement service led by Aston University).

### **Education-led regeneration – University Quarter**

The University Quarter is a 15 year project that will regenerate 400 acres between the Stoke-on-Trent railway station and Hanley city centre.

Together with associated projects that will give Stoke a new Central Business District and Retail Precinct, the University Quarter will provide Stoke with a critical mass of projects, which will attract new investment and jobs into the city.

The University Quarter brings together Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent FE College and Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College and is focused on creating new shared education facilities.

In doing so, the scheme will not only create a brand new gateway for Stoke, but will also encourage local people to progress into university education. It will also help meet the skills needs of local employees.

The first development on site – the new Sixth Form College – will open in September 2010.

### **Building our creativity – Custard Factory**

Dating back to the late 1800s, the former Bird's Custard offices and factories in Digbeth have, over the last 20 years, been transformed into Birmingham's leading creative community.

The Custard Factory is currently home to around 300 companies employing more than 700 people as well as bars, clubs, shops and restaurants. In 2007, Advantage West Midlands agreed to gap-fund the renovation of two buildings, Devonshire House and Fazeley Studios, to enable the expansion of the Custard Factory complex.

The £6.4 million investment formed part of the £20 million expansion plan funded by Custard Factory owner Bennie Grey, creating space for a further 110 companies and creating or safeguarding more than 400 jobs.

### **Building for the future**

The Building Essential Skills for Construction Trades (BEST) programme has helped more than 2,000 people to get jobs in the construction and allied trades since it began in 2003.

The programme received £5.5 million from Advantage West Midlands, with additional funding from Dudley Council Future Skills of £4.1 million and Sandwell Council of £500,000.

### **Improving access to rural employment – wheels to work**

'Wheels to Work' is an innovative transport scheme, which aims to overcome the barrier of access to training in remote rural areas.

Specifically, it deals with the vicious circle of “no job, no money, no vehicle” by offering individuals mopeds on a short term loan.

The scheme has particularly benefitted young, unemployed and disadvantaged people and to date, over 4,340 have benefitted from the scheme.