

Communities O&S – April 2024

Economic Development Update

The following briefing note provides an update to the Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee on recent economic development activity in Warwickshire.

It covers work undertaken by County Council officers and partners across a range of services as well as other key pieces of relevant news and information.

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HEADLINES/ KEY SUMMARY POINTS

- Unemployment across Warwickshire (3.3%) has remained below that of the West Midlands (4.5%)
- Warwickshire County Council in partnership with Warwick District Council and the Warwickshire Games Collective is once again showcasing the incredible Industry we have locally. The event is taking place on the Friday 10 and Saturday 11 May
- A Chinese manufacturer of electric vehicle batteries is in talks to invest more than £1bn to build a giant new factory on the outskirts of Coventry in Warwick District

1. ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

National Overview

Gross Domestic Product: monthly real GDP is estimated to have grown in January 2024 by 0.2% after a fall of 0.1% in December. Quarterly GDP for Q4 2023 was estimated to have decreased at -0.3%, resulting in an estimated recession in the second half of 2023 (subject to revision). Overall growth in 2023 was estimated to be 0.1%, indicating ongoing and increasingly entrenched economic weakness.

Services output - the services sector rose by 0.2% on a monthly basis in January 2024 and was the main contributor to overall growth. However, the services sector is estimated to show no growth in the 3 months to January. The wholesale and retail

trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles sub-sector was the largest contributor to monthly growth in January. Professional, scientific and technical activities was a strong contributor to growth on a 3-month basis, yet an overall negative contribution on a monthly basis. Education was the largest negative contribution to growth on a 3-month basis.

Production output – is estimated to have fallen by 0.2% in January 2024 on both a monthly and a 3-month basis. with a 3.3% fall in mining and quarrying being the largest negative contributor. On a monthly basis, water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities were the largest negative contributor. Manufacturing output increased 0.3% in January on a 3-month basis compared to October.

Construction output is estimated to have decreased by 0.9% in the 3 months to January 2024. New work decreased by 4.5%, with repair and maintenance increasing by 4.0%. Construction output is estimated to have increased by 1.1% on a monthly basis. This monthly increase is similar across new work as well as repair and maintenance. The main contributors to the monthly increase were private new housing and non-housing repair and maintenance.

CPI inflation rose by 3.4% in the 12 months to February 2024, dropping from 4.0% in January 2024. The largest downward contributions to the CPI rates came from food, restaurants and cafes. The largest upward pressure was from housing and household services, and motor fuels. The annual rate of inflation in food prices was 5.0% in January 2024, with a monthly rate of 0.2%. Motor fuels still remained 6.5% below February 2023 prices on average.

- The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintained **interest rates** at **5.25%** on its last meeting on 20th March 2024.
- **Average weekly earnings** excluding bonuses were £627 in January 2024 up from £593 in January 2023. In real terms (adjusted for CPIH inflation), regular pay rose 1.8% on an annual basis for November 2023 to January 2024.
- **Employment** – early estimates are that there were 30.2 million people were in PAYE employment in December 2023 (provisional estimate), an annual rise of 306,000 people or 1.0%. The three-month employment rate (Sep-Nov 2023) was 75.8%, up 0.1 percentage points from the previous quarter and continues to remain lower than before the pandemic.
- **Unemployment** - the UK unemployment rate was estimated to be 4.2% in the 3-months September-November 2023, the same as June-August 2023. These are the new revised numbers based on the ONS Labour Force Survey.
- **The value of sterling** remained flat at 1.27 US\$ in January 2024, after falling to its lowest value of 1.07 in September 2022. The most recent high was 1.31 US\$ in July 2023.

Local Overview

- The **Warwickshire unemployment rate (aged 16-64)** has levelled off at 3.3% in the year Oct 2022-Sep 2023 which is the same as in the year Jul 2022-Jun 2023. The local unemployment rate remains low compared to the equivalent rate of 3.7% for Great Britain and 4.5% for the West Midlands region.

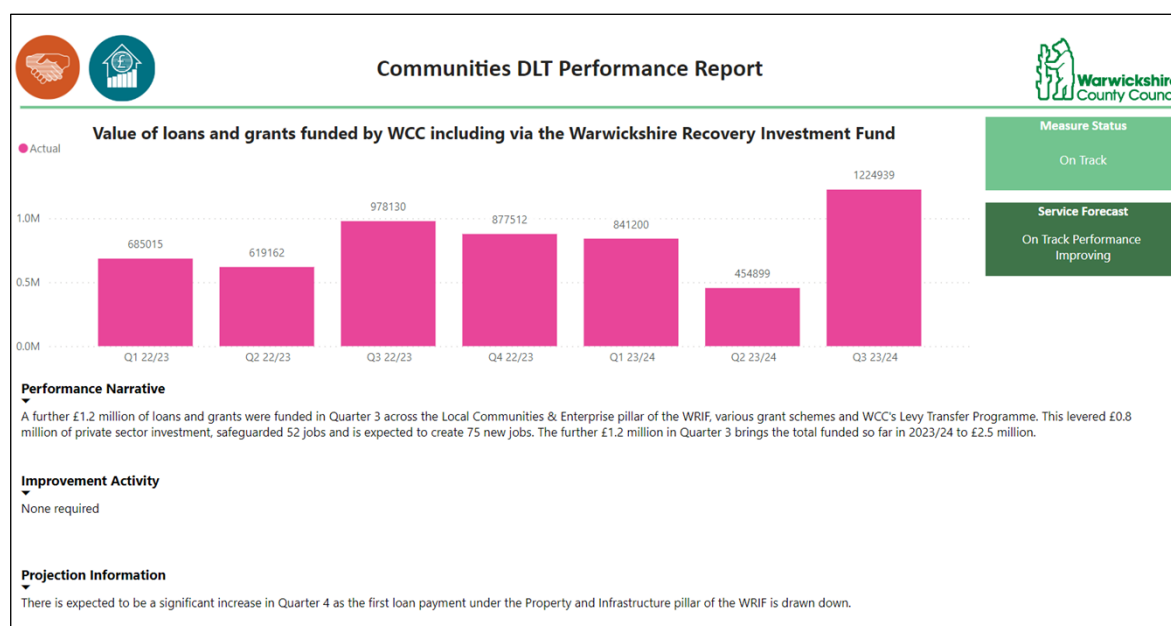
Many economic updates can be found in the [State of Warwickshire Dashboard](#) developed by WCC's Business Intelligence team.

2. BUSINESS & ECONOMY SUPPORT

Access to Finance

Overall Performance

WCC provided a further £1,224,939 of loans and grants during 2023/ 2024 Q3 across a range of programmes including the Local & Communities Enterprise (LCE) pillar of the Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund, the Apprenticeship Levy and a number of grant schemes.



This is the highest value funded by WCC in any quarter which is expected to be exceeded in 2023/ 2024 Q4 when the first loan payment under the Property and Infrastructure Fund of the WRIF is drawn down.

Overall performance for this financial year 23/24 is

- Funding support from WCC is £2,521,038.
- Levered over £2.8 million of private sector investment.
- Safeguarded 106 jobs.
- Created 55 new jobs, with a further 160 new jobs expected to be created in future years.
- The Apprenticeship Levy has also supported 98 apprenticeship opportunities in 2023/ 2024

As part of the Access to Finance offer are the Local Communities and Enterprise Fund (LCE) and Digital Creative Recovery Fund.

- **Local Communities and Enterprise Fund (Part of the Warwickshire Recovery Investment Fund)**

The LCE pillar of the WRIF, managed by Coventry and Warwickshire Reinvestment Trust on behalf of WCC, continues to attract high levels of interest. Quarter 3 showed a significant increase in businesses drawing down approved loans compared to quarter 2.

A further 12 loans worth £857,616 have been provided since reporting in November 2023 to Communities O&S, bringing the total loans approved to-date to 42. And worth £2,343,816.00. The LCE fund continues to lever significant private sector investment; £2,359,537.00 across all loans to-date. The current pipeline includes 21 small businesses with an estimated combined loan value of £968,000.

To register an interest, for enquiries or to refer a business, visit www.wrif.co.uk or www.cwrt.uk.com/wrif-lce-fund

Business Support Programmes

Business Growth Warwickshire Programme

The Business Growth Warwickshire Programme – which has been commissioned by Warwickshire County Council on behalf of the six local authorities in the county and which was launched at the end of November 2023 – is already seeing strong interest from businesses. So far just under **300 businesses across all areas** of the county have been engaged and **22 business assists** have already been completed.

Business Growth Warwickshire includes six support programmes: Start-Up, Business Resilience and Growth, Business Ready – High Growth and Innovation, Business Energy Advice Service, Manufacturing Growth and Project Warwickshire (for the visitor economy and hospitality sectors). The £4.6 million programme is funded by UK Government (through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund via the five District and Borough Councils and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) and Warwickshire County Council. Delivery is through a range of specialist delivery organisations.

Business Growth Warwickshire is expected to engage over 2,000 businesses before March 2025, more than 500 of which will receive intensive, tailored support.

For more information, visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ukspf or contact Matthew Epps in the Business & Economy team (matthewepps@warwickshire.gov.uk).

3. EMPLOYABILITY & SKILLS SUPPORT

Fair Chance Employer Programme

The Fair Chance Jobs portal launched in September 2023 and has been well received by employers as a dedicated space to recruit in an inclusive way. Businesses sign up and make a pledge to be a Fair Chance Employer, this unlocks a variety of support tools within the programme including workshops to promote the importance of inclusivity and a diverse workforce by supporting hiring managers to utilise innovative recruitment & on-boarding techniques to support new recruits with supportive needs.

To date we have **58 employers signed** up to the programme and **28 live vacancies posted each week** on the jobs portal.

Working with a range of partners including Warwickshire Supported Employment Service, DWP, WCC leaving care team and our network of employability providers. There has been a steady increase in users since its launch and data indicates there are now **220 people actively** using the portal to look for work.

Warwickshire Supported Employment Service

Working with a range of employers including those who have pledged to be a Fair Chance Employer, the supported employment service helps customers with learning difficulties in to paid employment. The service, first launched in February 2023, is approach its first year and has to date achieved:

- 319 referrals from various partners, sharing details of customers looking to go in to work. The referrals come from parents and carers, the learning disability team, sixth form/colleges, the jobcentre plus and Jobs 22.
- Conducted 7 industry tours, showcasing careers in hospitality, warehouse and logistics and ICT.
- Supported 12 customers into work with a Fair Chance Employer. 5 of the roles offered were created to through job design.
- 44 Customers are in paid work of this 16 are working independently and 28 are receiving in work support from our employment support advisor.
- 4 of our customers go into apprenticeships.

Future Skills Fund

The Warwickshire Skills Hub business support team have successfully launched the Future apprenticeships fund aimed at supporting industry as it evolves with new and emerging technologies including low carbon agenda such as vehicle electrification, battery technology & digital skills. The fund has been shaped with several strands to build a modular training support package for businesses to access appropriate support. The fund has received a positive response from industry and applications for support have been received within a week of the launch.

The fund will create annual county-wide Future Apprenticeships & Skills Fairs to enable businesses to recruit people into apprenticeships and paid employment opportunities & enable people explore in work training opportunities to support career development.

- **New Direction 50+** - People who are aged 50+ will be supported to undertake apprenticeships to re-skill and re-train to update their skill set to ensure continued employment & skills development opportunities. Businesses will be able to apply for funding to support associated apprenticeship training costs and additional funding is available for short courses and training not included in traditional apprenticeship training in the form of the **50+ Skills investment fund**.
- **Future Apprenticeships Salary Support Programme** - Businesses are also able to access salary support to assist in creating new employment opportunities for apprentices to undertake training for new and emerging technologies to build their future workforce.

This is alongside the recently recruited Business Skills Support Advisor who is working with business to undertake skills reviews and gather intelligence to support the future skills conversation and to lead on creating industry round tables.

The round table discussions bring together industry experts together with colleges, universities and training providers to analyse current provision and the skills needs of the future workforce. These conversations will support the development of clear skills development pathways for industry and be valuable for training institutions in shaping training offer tailored to local demand. Warwickshire businesses have responded positively and are keen to engage and help shape this agenda. They have also expressed support to engage with schools to make our Warwickshire young people aware of the opportunities available for them as they look at their post 16 options.

To date two roundtable discussions have taken place, one Construction and another in Games Development Sectors. There are plans to work across a range of sectors.

Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Programme

The WCC Levy transfer programme continues to be well received by employers to support them to access WCC levy funds to cover apprenticeships training costs. Within this year WCC have pledged £702 595 of levy funds to 51 businesses creating opportunities for 81 apprentices across the county.

Businesses have also benefited from the **Apprenticeship Progression Programme**. The programme incentivises employers to continue to invest in skills by progressing them onto further apprenticeship qualifications to support the needs of the business. This fund has supported businesses to progress 15 different apprentices via this grant. The sectors were varied from the Care Sector to Hospitality, Beauty, Maintenance and Security and Protective Services and mainly supported level 2 to level 3 progression routes.

The Warwickshire Careers Hub

Since coming in to WCC in September 2023, the Careers Hub is now well established within the Skills Hub. The relationship has helped increase the employer engagement

and has been instrumental in securing WCC first Cornerstone Employers. Following an event lead in Autumn, WCC is supporting 7 employers become Cornerstone Employers with further interest from other including, EON Energy, BAM Construction, Sertec, Mecalac, CILT, Rebellion Development, HS2, Lisi Aerospace and Balfour Beatty Living.

The number of schools who have joined the Careers Hub is now at 52 schools across Warwickshire. Appendix 2 shows a list of the schools in Warwickshire.

The Enterprise Coordinators have collectively undertaken 89 visits to schools/colleges since September and are helping career's leaders on their career programmes, supporting them meet the Gatsby Benchmarks and promoting their events to employers and providers. Alongside these visit Enterprise Coordinators have attended student mock interview days, CV workshops, delivered training to students to enable them to become careers ambassadors and introducing a new enterprise competition for our SEND schools.

The Gatsby Benchmarks is a framework that defines what world class careers provision in education looks like. All of WCC schools and colleges complete a self-assessment tool at the end of each term, that produces a report showing how well they are meeting each of the 8 Benchmarks out of 100%. Our baseline data showed that our schools/colleges were averaging at 5.79. At the end of term 1 there has been significant progress and WCC is now averaging at 6.04, against a national average score of 5.5.

The Careers Hub has also been successful in securing further funding for a Teacher Encounter Project/experience of the workplace fund. The funding will support a number of Fair Chance Employers to host site visits for teaching staff to experience future career opportunities from a number of key sectors across Warwickshire. This project will create a series of interactions with employers, an opportunity for teachers to take part in site tours and collaboratively create teaching resources.

Acknowledging the increasing levels of young people with SEND finding it challenging to transition from education into employment, the focus is to work with SEND schools and careers leaders who support a high number of SEND students. The upskilling and educating our SEND teachers to experience first-hand will be invaluable, allowing them to understand the key skills and personal attributes employers look for when recruiting.

Multiply Fund – New Projects

Warwickshire County Council has announced two more Multiply projects with more expected to follow, after two calls for projects were made in the second half of 2023. North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College has been awarded £200,000 to support employees whose first language is not English to learn 'the language of match whereas Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber Training has been awarded £96,000 to deliver 'Work in Numbers' which will target the numeracy skills deficit in the county through vocationally tailored learning in a variety of key sectors.

These are the latest projects in Warwickshire to be funded by the Government's Multiply Fund which is managed by Warwickshire County Council. Others include projects delivered by WCC's Adult and Community Learning, Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency (CWEDA) and PET-Xi. Multiply has so far supported 1718 people in Warwickshire to improve their numeracy skills. For more information about Multiply and the support available in Warwickshire, visit: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/multiply or contact Claire Williams in the Business & Economy team (clairewilliams@warwickshire.gov.uk).

4. SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND INWARD INVESTMENT

Coventry and Warwickshire chosen for Government funding to drive tech innovation

Innovate UK will be announcing £1.8m of investment through the first round of the Creative & Immersive Launchpad. This is being awarded to 13 projects for Coventry & Warwickshire businesses. A second call for projects is expected to be announced in early May.

WCC hosted national roundtable 'Supercharging Investment in Gaming' .

In February as part of Tech UK's Supercharging Investment series, WCC hosted 15 participants from industry (tech, gaming and finance), Government (local and national), academia, and regional organisations to address the challenges holding back investment in the emerging technologies underpinning the UK's games industry. Previous events in the series have focused on quantum and space.

Interactive Futures, Warwickshire's 2 day showcase of the local Video Game Industry is back

Warwickshire County Council in partnership with Warwick District Council and the Warwickshire Games Collective is once again showcasing the incredible Industry we have locally. The event is taking place on the Friday 10 and Saturday 11 May at the Royal Spa Centre and comprises of a conference and exhibition. Friday is focused on Industry, discussing hot topics and inviting developers from across the country to come and join in the discussion. Saturday will focus on skills and attracting a diverse pipeline of talent into the sector and discovering the range of opportunity it holds.

Aero & Auto DSK – Department for Business & Trade

In March, Invest Warwickshire worked with Department for Business and Trade (DBT) colleagues to arrange a 'Developing Sector Knowledge' visit to Coventry and Warwickshire for a delegation of staff from Canada and the US. The delegation of 15 in total extended to staff from DBT Manufacturing, Mobility and Defence Team, and other HQ colleagues engaged in the development of sector propositions.

The delegation visited WMG at the University of Warwick and MIRA Technology Park on March 20 and Envisage Group in Coventry on the 21, and engineering services provider active in auto and more recently aerospace.

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7176914492033794048>

FDI Awards 2024

Coventry & Warwickshire was recognised again in 2024 by a leading investment awards. FDI Intelligence, part of the Financial Times Group, publish their flagship fDi 'European Cities & Regions of the Future' rankings every February. It benchmarks European cities and regions according to their economic, financial, and business strengths. Invest Coventry & Warwickshire have again been highly placed in the rankings, with an improved 2nd placing for 'FDI Strategy'. up one place on last year. The area was also awarded top-ten placings for Economic Potential and Business Friendliness.

<https://business.warwickshire.gov.uk/february-2024/news-in-brief/coventry>

5. WARWICKSHIRE PLACES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Seasonal Place Promotion and Marketing

Warwickshire Christmas 2023 equipped participating towns and local, independent businesses with high quality seasonal images and inspiration to lever social media engagement during a critical trading season for Warwickshire High Streets.

Over the course of the campaign, 1 November – 24 December, 437 social media posts and stories were shared, securing a reach of 24,884 (up around 1,000 per cent on equivalent period in Sept/Oct, up 260 per cent from last year) and resulting in overall social media statistics, showing:

- REACH: 26,559 VISITS: 1,719 NEW LIKES/FOLLOWERS: 131.

Analysis of the campaign shows that business participation was key, getting businesses on board before the campaign also helped engagement - those businesses also used the hashtag #WarwickshireChristmas more readily and organic campaign growth resulted in non-participating businesses joining on tagging and use of the #warwickshirechristmas too. Santa based posts, especially early on, were strong in terms of reach and shares and these images have been made available for people to use in their own campaigns.

Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPS)

An independent review of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), led by the Chair of Visit England (VE), was published 20th July 2022. These recommendations were enacted by central government and the landscape of the visitor economy has changed to allow for a strategic support mechanism for regions / larger areas called LVEPS. All local authorities in Coventry and Warwickshire have been working together with Shakespeare's England, Visit Coventry and Visit Northern Warwickshire to explore how a wider partnership approach could support, grow and deliver a world class visitor economy for the region. Visit England (VE) and Visit Britain (VB) have been working closely with our LVEP during this process and will continue as the future governance and direction is agreed.

APPENDIX 1: BUSINESS NEWS

Major business headlines from around Warwickshire

Digital Creative Sector

Leamington marketing agency celebrates 40 years

Palmer Hargreaves, an international marketing and communications agency, is marking 40 years since it opened its doors for business in February 1984. The small agency has now grown into a multi-million pound business with a global workforce of more than 250 employees. Despite its success on the world stage, it retains an important connection to its hometown of Leamington Spa.

<https://thebusinessmagazine.co.uk/companies/leamington-marketing-agency-celebrates-40-years/>

Kwalee takes stake in French studio

Kwalee, a Leamington Spa-headquartered games publisher and developer, has taken a stake in a French studio. 8SEC has published more than 90 mobile games, achieving in excess of 50 million game downloads with titles such as Trivia.io, Hero Squad and Idle Army. It will continue to operate independently out of offices in Paris and Lyon but with the benefit of Kwalee's global team and expertise in user acquisition, monetisation, game design and data science.

<https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/kwalee-takes-stake-in-french-studio>

Automotive/ Future Mobility Sector

Chinese EV battery maker linked to Coventry & Warwick Giga Park Site

A Chinese manufacturer of electric vehicle batteries is in talks to invest more than £1bn to build a giant new factory on the outskirts of Coventry in Warwick District. EVE Energy, is understood to be in talks to construct a 5.7m sq ft gigafactory, which will form one of the main parts of the planned UK Centre for Electrification, an investment zone in the West Midlands.

<https://thebusinessmagazine.co.uk/technology-innovation/coventry-offered-35m-to-fund-gigafactory-driving-uks-electrified-future/>

Bentley boss Adrian Hallmark named new Aston Martin CEO

Adrian Hallmark – whose departure from Bentley was announced earlier this morning – will become Aston Martin's third CEO in four years, following Tobias Moers and current boss Amedeo Felisa, who will step down as he approaches his 78th birthday.

Hallmark has left Bentley with immediate effect, and will start his new role in Gaydon "no later than 1 October 2024", said Aston in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/aston-martin-name-bentleys-adrian-hallmark-ceo-ft-reports-2024-03-22/>

Aston Martin recruits 400 at Gaydon and St Athan

Luxury car maker Aston Martin will recruit about 400 technicians to help produce its next generation of sports cars and increased demand for the DBX SUV. Sports car production is based at Gaydon and the SUVs are built at St Athan. The jobs will be agency roles and recruitment has already started.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-68336536>

JLR reports highest quarterly profit since 2017

Jaguar Land Rover Automotive Plc reported its financial results for the three months to 31 December 2023 (Q3 FY24). JLR delivered another strong performance in Q3 FY24, increasing wholesale sales to fulfil more client orders in the quarter. Revenue for the quarter was £7.4 billion, up 22% versus Q3 FY23 and up 8% versus Q2 FY24. Revenues for the nine months to 31 December 2023 were £21.1 billion – JLR's highest ever revenue generation in the first nine months of a financial year and up 35% compared to the prior year.

<https://www.automotiveworld.com/news-releases/jlr-reports-highest-quarterly-profit-since-2017/>

2,500 jobs move closer after major plans land approval

Proposals for a major expansion of Nuneaton's MIRA Technology Park, led by a private equity investor and developer and expected to create more than 2,500 jobs, have been approved. The proposals from Evans Randall Investors have been backed by North Warwickshire Borough Council. The 'South Site' will provide a large-scale development incorporating 2.3 million sq ft of manufacturing and industrial facilities designed to be complementary to the R&D facilities and campus at the existing MTP site.

<https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/2500-jobs-move-closer-after-major-plans-land-approval>

Future of flight discussed at Warwick's first Electric Aviation Symposium

The inaugural Electric Aviation Symposium was held in Warwick recently, bringing together regulators, end users and infrastructure providers from across the aviation

ecosystem. Together they talked through the possibilities and challenges associated with electric aviation as the UK looks to become a world leader in the field. The event was organised by the team at Warwick-based Flux Aviation, who are in the late stages of developing FLUX-75 – a complete electric powertrain package intended to replace combustion engines in a range of popular training aircraft.

<https://thebusinessmagazine.co.uk/esg/future-of-flight-discussed-at-warwicks-first-electric-aviation-symposium/>

Tourism and Visitor Economy

£30m to be invested in Coventry and Warwickshire hotel sector

More than £30 million is set to be invested in hotels across Coventry & Warwickshire this year. Conference Coventry and Warwickshire, which works with the hotel industry across the region, says that the investment is a vote of confidence in the visitor economy.

A new 145-room Hampton by Hilton Hotel is due to open in Nuneaton this summer and is the cornerstone of Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council's Grayson Place development, as part of its Transforming Nuneaton project. Other hotels recently open and in development locally include the Hotel Indigo in Coventry and the The Barn At Berryfields in Meriden.

<https://thebusinessmagazine.co.uk/companies/30m-to-be-invested-in-coventry-warks-hotels/>

Emerge Surf deal paves way for major wave park

A partnership between Stoneweg and Teras Capital has acquired the former Emerge Surf development site in Coleshill in a deal that paves the way for the creation of a landmark wave park as part of a £50m commitment. Stoneweg InfraSport has acquired the Coleshill site from IM Properties. The development will be centred around a 5.4-acre man-made WaveGarden Cove surfing lagoon, able to generate 1,000 waves per hour, up to two metres high, with adjustable size and shape.

<https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/emerge-surf-deal-paves-way-for-major-wave-park>

Launch of Michelin Guide 2024 has Warwickshire venues counting their foodie stars

Two Warwickshire restaurants kept their single stars for 2024. One of them is The Cross at Kenilworth – a Grade II listed inn that's held this star for nine years and counting. The other is The Royal Oak at Whatcote, which counts itself among the oldest pubs in the country.

<https://thebusinessmagazine.co.uk/lifestyle/launch-of-michelin-guide-2024-has-south-west-venues-counting-their-foodie-stars/>

Other Business News

New Employment Park proposals Include lorry park with welfare facilities

Proposals have been submitted by Hodgetts Estates for a landmark commercial development at Dordon in North Warwickshire on the north east of J10 M42 Dordon/A5, Polesworth. Outline permission is sought for a strategic employment development of more than one million sq ft of commercial floorspace. The scheme aims to deliver highly sustainable big box units targeted at national and international, as well as a meaningful number of smaller incubator units for SMEs, and the proposals include a dedicated 150-space overnight lorry park with welfare facilities, 24hr security and fenced parking.

<https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/employment-scheme-planned-for-golden-triangle-site>

Alstom reveals plans for new passenger rail service

Alstom, a global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, plans to operate a new passenger rail service across England and Wales. Working in partnership with consultancy SLC Rail, the open access operation will be known as Wrexham, Shropshire and Midlands Railway (WSMR), and the route will include new rail links from Warwickshire locations including Nuneaton and Coleshill.

<https://www.insidermedia.com/news/national/alstom-reveals-plans-for-new-passenger-rail-service>

West Midlands exhibiting at UKREiiF in May

The West Midlands area will be exhibiting at the UK's Real Estate and Infrastructure Investment Forum (UKREiiF) in May, showcasing development opportunities and

regenerative schemes worth more than £20bn. Investment opportunities from Birmingham, Coventry & Warwickshire, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton will be showcased at the event.

The delegation includes senior public sector figures who will showcase a portfolio of development opportunities. These will include the recently announced West Midlands Investment Zone, comprising Coventry & Warwickshire Gigapark, Birmingham Knowledge Quarter and Wolverhampton's Green Innovation Corridor.

<https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/west-midlands-to-exhibit-at-ukreiiif-for-the-first-time>

New Office Location The Point Signs Telent for 25,000sqft Grade A Offices

Leading technology company Telent, has secured 25,000 sq ft at Warwick Business Park, after a major refurbishment by owner Palm Capital.

<https://thebusinessmagazine.co.uk/property/telent-sign-up-to-25000-sq-ft-in-refurbed-warwick-offices/>

First phase completes at SEGRO Park Coventry

The first three warehouses have been completed at SEGRO Park Coventry, providing 660,000 sq ft of space at the 215-acre logistics hub. The buildings include a 300,000 sq ft regional distribution hub for DHL eCommerce UK and two speculative units, comprising 140,000 sq ft and 220,000 sq ft respectively. They have been built to modern sustainability standards, achieving a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating and the highest EPC A+ standard.

DP World Logistics signed a pre-let in 2023 for a fourth building at the development, which will involve the company occupying 598,050 sq ft of space. In total these pre-lets and speculative buildings account for 40 per cent of the consented development space at the site on the edge of Coventry Airport in Warwick District.

<https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/first-phase-completes-at-segro-park-coventry>

MCS Group appointed to £12m headquarters

Warwick-based contractor MCS Group has been appointed to complete a £12m headquarters in Rugby at Houlton for a German electrical engineering company. WAGO UK & Ireland has instructed MCS Group for the construction of new offices and warehouse facilities on Crick Road, Houlton, in Rugby. The scheme includes a

three-storey office area with approximately 34,000 sq ft of associated warehouse space and assembly area. It will be the first employment scheme at the Houlton site, where there is further development land available.

<https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/mcs-group-appointed-to-12m-headquarters>

APPENDIX 2 – Schools engaged with Warwickshire Careers Hub

Exhall Grange Specialist School	Rugby High School
Evergreen School	Alcester Grammar School
Studley High School	Alcester Academy
Stratford Girls' Grammar School	Stratford Upon Avon School
Shipston High School	King Edward VI School
Oak Wood Secondary School	St Benedict's Catholic High School
Discovery Academy	Venture Academy
Lawrence Sheriff School	Quest Academy
North Leamington School	Welcombe Hills School
Southam College	Kenilworth School and Sixth Form
Kineton High School	Stratford College
Trinity Catholic School	Campion School
Warwickshire College Group	The Avon Valley School and Performing Arts College
Etone	Bilton School
Brooke School	Henley In Arden School
Hartshill	Myton School
Aylesford School	The Coleshill School
Ash Green	Woodlands
Higham Lane	Ashlawn School
Rugby Free Secondary School	TQEA
St Thomas More	Nicholas Chamberlaine
Nuneaton Academy	Harris CoE
George Eliot	Houlton School - to join
The Warwickshire Academy - New	Oakley School - to join
King VI college	
Kingsbury	
Polesworth	
NWSLC	