

Solihull
Chamber
of Commerce



Doing Business in Solihull: An Economic Snapshot

May 2022

Connect. Support. Grow.

Sponsored by:

prime
ACCOUNTANTS GROUP

Contents

02

Introduction

02

Foreword

04

Summary

05

People & Skills

08

Business Environment

10

Sustainable Solihull

12

On the Horizon

Introduction

This report provides a snapshot of the sub-regional economy of the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull and insight into the real world experiences of local firms doing business in the area. It aims to be a resource to support business and stakeholder decisions around investment and opportunities within Solihull.

The Metropolitan Borough of Solihull is a constituent part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and part of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP).

This report has been produced by the Insight and Intelligence Services Team at the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce with contributions from regional stakeholders and business leaders. It is sponsored by Prime Accountants Group.

Foreword



Sam Frampton

Head of Solihull Chamber of Commerce

This year's report establishes that Solihull continues to be a thriving hub for business- rich in skills, talent, opportunity, commercial potential, and ambitious net-zero aims. Overall, our local economy is strong and will only be enhanced by developments such as the Arden Cross Interchange and the continued success of our leading businesses, including the NEC, Birmingham Airport and Gymshark.

HS2 will also establish us as a major gateway to the region and, with greater connectivity to the capital, will open the door for Solihull's businesses to showcase their offering.

Despite the impacts of Covid-19, our increasing employment rate signifies growth across all groups and our borough continues to boast a higher job density than the regional average.

Thanks to the various educational institutions across Solihull, including Solihull College & University Centre and Arden Multi Academy Trust, our future workforce is flourishing, and our young people are working to maintain our ranking as the highest educated area within the West Midlands Combined Authority. In line with the Chamber's campaign to increase opportunities for young people, it is also great to see that Solihull is excelling in the provision of apprenticeships and accounts for 8.5 per cent of the West Midlands' total.

It's pleasing to see how we've maintained our economic output despite the challenges created by the pandemic, seeing the start of 960 new businesses and with 43 per cent of SME's started in 2015 surviving into the pandemic. Whilst businesses in our borough have undoubtedly suffered as a result of economic uncertainty over the last few years, our future looks promising.

This report also shines a spotlight on some of the challenges currently facing Solihull, from an ageing population to economic disparity at ward level. As a Chamber, we will strive to answer and champion the needs of local businesses and support them in their recovery post-pandemic, as well as to enhance Solihull's profile on the international stage. Going forward, it is a time to seize the opportunities being afforded to our borough and continue to excel on the regional and national playing field.



Kevin Johns

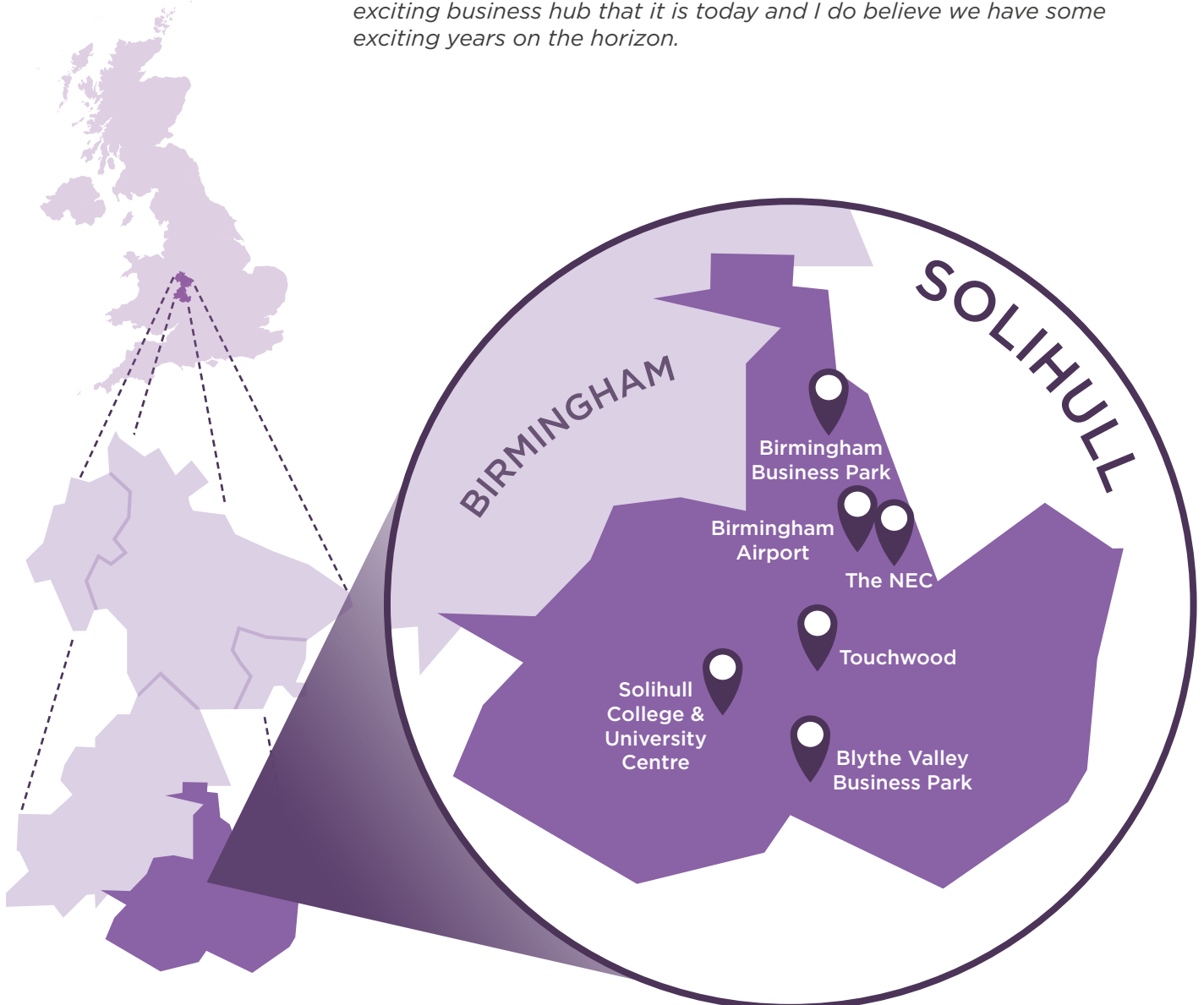
Director, Prime Accountants Group

Solihull has faced unpredictable challenges over the past two years, yet I strongly believe we have come out the other side in the best position we possibly could. Improvement plans are still underway despite delays caused by COVID, and we will soon see the benefits come into fruition. As with our previous Economic Snapshot, our latest figures show that Solihull certainly has something to shout about.

As a whole, our employment rate remains higher than average at nearly 80% which is an incredible figure to see following a tough few years for business. Meanwhile our schools continue to achieve outstanding results, despite numerous lockdowns and teachers having to adapt to ensure the next generation gain their vital skills and education.

As a borough we are very lucky to have a great network of over 8,000 businesses who have continued to support one another and continually bring their own improvements and ideas to Solihull and the surrounding areas. 43% of all businesses set up in Solihull during 2015 continued to trade into 2020, a figure higher than the national average; with over 960 new businesses set up in Solihull in 2020, I do hope they continue to thrive, and we see them become a part of this statistic and continue to trade for many years to come.

Without these businesses, Solihull would simply fail to be the busy and exciting business hub that it is today and I do believe we have some exciting years on the horizon.



Summary

217,500
inhabitants

43.1%
qualified to
NVQ4+

8,215
businesses

Key Sectors



Professional,
Scientific &
Technical



Construction



Information and
Communication



Business
Administration &
Support Services



Retail

Key Assets



Transport

Highly
connected by
road, rail and
air



Anchor
Institutions

Home to key
economic drivers:
the NEC Group
and HS2



Education

15 secondary
schools and 2
further education
colleges



Business Parks

Home to
Birmingham
Business Park
and Blythe Valley
Business Park

On the horizon

HS2

Commonwealth
Games

UK Central
Hub

How we compare...

Higher than the National Average

Employment Rate:	76.9%
Jobs per working age resident:	1.17
Full time weekly earnings for those working in Solihull:	£665
Percentage of school pupils achieving grades 5-9 in Maths & English:	53.3%
GVA per head:	£47,786
Average house price:	£313,666
GDHI per head:	£23,722

In line with the National Average

Proportion of the population educated to NVQ L4+:	43.1%
School pupil average attainment 8 score:	51

Lower than the National Average

Proportion of working age residents (16-64):	59.4%
Start-up rate (per 10,000 residents):	74.4
Proportion employed in professional occupations:	20.7%

People & Skills

Population

The population of Solihull has continued to grow since the last Solihull Economic Snapshot was published in 2019. There remains a higher proportion of older citizens than average, especially when compared to the Birmingham Local Authority area where almost 65% of the populace are of working age. In addition, the diversity of the population has declined since 2019, with only 8.7% of citizens identifying as BAME and less than 5% being of non-British nationality.

2020	Solihull	Change since 2017	WMCA	Change since 2017	UK	Change since 2017
Population	217,500	↑ 1.7%	2,939,900	↑ 1.5%	67,081,200	↑ 1.6%
Working Age Population (16-64)	59.4%	↓ 0.3%	63.1%	No change	62.4%	↓ 0.5%
Percentage of population with British Nationality	95.2%	↑ 0.4%	88.4%	No change	90.8%	↑ 0.4%

Employment

In terms of the labour market, Solihull has continued to go from strength-to-strength despite the challenges presented over the past couple of years by the Covid-19 pandemic. The most recent data available shows a growth in the employment rate both generally and for ethnic minority groups, while the unemployment rate has fallen. It also boasts a higher job density than the regional and national averages.

Population (aged 16-64)	Solihull	Change since 2018	WMCA	Change since 2018	UK	Change since 2018
Employment Rate 2020	79.6%	↑ 3.1%	69.8%	↑ 1.6%	75.5%	↑ 0.5%
Unemployment Rate 2020	4.2%	↓ 0.3%	5.1%	↓ 1.4%	4.1%	↓ 0.2%
Ethnic Minority Employment rate 2020	78.9%	↑ 6.7%	61.5%	↑ 1.2%	67.4%	↑ 2.2%
Jobs Density 2020	1.17	↑ 0.14%	0.80	↑ 0.03	0.84	↓ 0.01

The three largest sectors by employment in Solihull are Administrative and Support Service Activities (27.5% of total employee jobs), Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles (9.9%) and Professional, Scientific and Technical activities (8.5%).

The five largest categories of employment by occupation are:

2020	Solihull	Change since 2018	WMCA	Change since 2018	UK	Change since 2018
Professional Occupations (SOC2)	20.7%	↓ 4.7%	21.9%	↑ 2.8%	23.4%	↑ 2.7%
Associate Professional and Technical (SOC3)	18.3%	↑ 3.8%	14.1%	↑ 1.1%	15.4%	↑ 0.8%
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials (SOC1)	10.5%	↓ 2.5%	10.2%	↑ 1.6%	10.6%	↓ 0.2%
Elementary Occupations (SOC9)	10.2%	↑ 2.2%	11%	↓ 1.3%	9.3%	↓ 1.1%
Administrative and Secretarial (SOC4)	9.6%	↓ 1.9%	10%	↓ 0.2%	10.3%	↑ 0.2%

Skills & Education

Education achievement continues to flourish in Solihull, with the population attainment rates in the area being larger compared to the broader West Midlands area and in-line with national averages. The level of those educated to NVQ3 and above has risen since 2018 to 61.4%, with this being the highest in the WMCA geography. In contrast, just 41.7% of 16-64 year olds in Sandwell were qualified to this level.

	Solihull	Change since 2018	WMCA	Change since 2018	UK	Change since 2018
NVQ 4+ 2020	43.1%	↑ 2.9	37.1%	↑ 4.0	43%	↑ 4.0
No formal qualifications 2020	5.9%	↓ 1.0	8.3%	↓ 2.0	6.6%	↓ 1.0
9-5 Maths and English 2020/21 (academic year, England only)	53.3%	↑ 5.7 (since 2018/19)	48.7%	↑ 9.2 (since 2018/19)	51.9%	↑ 8.4 (since 2018/19)
Average attainment 8 score 2020/21 (academic year, England only)	51%	↑ 3.4 (since 2018/19)	49.5%	↑ 3.9 (since 2018/19)	50.9%	↑ 4.1 (since 2018/19)

In the 2020/21 academic year there were 1,210 apprenticeship starts in Solihull, a 10% decrease on the previous year. Of these, 42% were advanced apprenticeships and 36% were higher apprenticeships. Across the West Midlands, there were 14,200 apprenticeship starts, 8.5% of which were located in Solihull.

Income & Lifestyle

Solihull is an affluent area compared to other parts of the West Midlands, with the working population having the second highest median gross weekly pay in the region. The amount of disposable household income for the working population of Solihull is also higher than regional and national averages. Solihull is one of the least deprived Local Authorities in the West Midlands but incomes, poverty, unemployment and life expectancy are unequal across Solihull.

2021	Solihull	Change	WMCA	Change	UK	Change
Median gross weekly pay for full time workers 2021	£665.00	↑ 8.6% (since 2018)	£581.80	↑ 4.5% (since 2018)	£610.70	↑ 7.3% (since 2018)
Gross disposable household income per head 2019	£23,722	↑ 7.6% (since 2016)	£18,350	↑ 24.6% (since 2016)	£21,433	↑ 10.3% (since 2016)
Average house price December 2021	£313,666	↑ 10.6% (since 2019)	£238,238	↑ 29.1% (since 2019)	£274,712	↑ 20.4% (since 2019)

48 of Solihull's 134 neighbourhoods were among the 20% least income deprived areas in England, while 24 of the neighbourhoods were amongst the 20% most income deprived in 2019. There is a 39% internal disparity between neighbourhoods in Solihull, meaning that 40% in the most deprived areas are income-deprived and 1% of people in the least deprived areas are income-deprived.

Case Studies



Vijay Jogia,
Local Business Manager Solihull,
Metro Bank

“Solihull and the surrounding areas have continued to see an increase in the average house prices with Solihull currently at £313,666 which is an increase of 10.6% since 2019 and the West Midlands also showing vast increases. This is a positive note considering the impact of the Covid Pandemic and how consumers were impacted with their employment and how furlough was introduced having a wider impact on mortgage applications as mortgage underwriting became more stricter and also taking longer to approve causing delays with house purchase completions.

Since 2019 banks have been supportive with a wider range of mortgage offerings such as the reintroduction of 95% mortgages for first time buyers and a more streamlined underwriting process giving house buyers the confidence to move forward with house purchases within the region more smoothly. The rise in average prices may have also had a big influence due to the governments relaxing stamp duty thresholds.

Solihull continues to be a very desirable location for home buyers due to the vast infrastructure implemented in Solihull and also the motorway access having a great benefit”.

“We are supporting local and regional businesses to ‘build back better’ post-pandemic, by listening to what they need in terms of current and future skills and responding through our curriculum development. We are really proud to have been graded ‘Good’ this month in our first Ofsted inspection since the merger with Stratford-Upon-Avon College, including for Apprenticeship provision which has been most significantly impacted by the pandemic. Inspectors reported that the college has ‘constructed a curriculum which is ambitious and meets local and regional skills needs’ as well as having well developed and ‘extensive relationships with local employers’. We offer courses up to Level 7 across a wide range of vocational and technical disciplines and are keen to ensure our curriculum is agile, supporting businesses to create a talent pipeline which enables them to thrive”.



Rebecca Gater,
Principal, Solihull College and
University Centre

Business Environment

Business Demographics

Solihull is home to over 8000 SMEs, with less than 1% of its enterprises employing over 250 employees. It continues to have high survival rates and low birth rates compared to the national average.

2021	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total Enterprises	Change since 2018
Solihull	90.1%	7.5%	1.8%	0.6%	8215	↓ 0.1%
WMCA	89%	8.8%	1.6%	0.5%	91,095	↑ 5.9%
UK	89.7%	8.4%	1.5%	0.4%	2,765,150	↑ 3.5%

The latest data from 2020 shows that there were 960 business births in Solihull, which accounts for 6% of births in the West Midlands. Compared to 2017, the rate of new enterprise births per 10,000 resident population (aged 16-64) has increased to 74.4, an increase of 14.1. During the same period, the West Midlands rate increased by 15.3 to 80.5 per 10,000 people of working age.

In terms of business deaths, Solihull accounts for 8% of deaths in the West Midlands Combined Authority area as of the latest data (2020). The rate of enterprise deaths per 10,000 of the 16-64 population is still below the English average (80.1 for England compared to 79.8 in Solihull), although has risen since 2017. 43.0% of Solihull businesses that were born in 2015 survived into 2020, which is 3.5% higher than the rate across England.

The top five sectors in terms of number of enterprises are:

2021	Solihull	Change since 2018	WMCA	Change since 2018	UK	Change since 2018
Professional, scientific and technical	20%	↓ 1.9%	13.2%	↓ 1.5%	16.4%	↓ 1.1%
Construction	14.1%	↑ 1.2%	11.7%	↑ 0.5%	13.0%	↑ 0.6%
Information and communication	10.0%	↓ 0.6%	6.0%	↓ 0.5%	7.7%	↓ 0.5%
Business administration and support services	8.9%	↓ 0.1%	9.2%	↓ 0.1%	8.3%	↓ 0.1%
Retail	6.3%	↑ 0.4%	10.4%	↑ 0.7%	8.0%	↑ 0.5%

According to KWB research, headline rents for offices in Solihull in the past year (2021) have risen by 10-15%. 54% of their take-up was for office space up to 10,000 sq ft. Birmingham Business Park also represented 77,345 sq ft (30%) of the annual take-up. It is becoming more and more popular for large-scale relocation to be moving closer to the M42/Solihull area due to its connectivity. The HS2 Interchange and the masterplan for the new NEC campus will also add to the appeal for businesses to relocate to this area over the next few years.

Economic Output

In 2019, the most recent data available, the total GVA for Solihull was £10.34bn, which accounts for 9.7% of the West Midlands Combined Authority’s total. This is second only to Birmingham (£27.8bn) out of the seven constituency authorities in the WMCA. In terms of GVA per head, it is the highest in the Combined Authority.

2019	Solihull	Change since 2017	WMCA	Change since 2017	UK	Change since 2017
Total GVA	£10.34bn	↑ 34.1%	£106.7bn	↑ 60.3%	£1,977bn	↑ 8.7%
GVA per head	£47,786	↑ 32.6%	£24,014	↑ 4.6 %	£29,599	↑ 7.9%



John Bryce,
Director, KWB

“Current office market conditions, of high demand and low supply, are pushing rents one way – up. So, investors can expect excellent yields here by addressing this supply issue, speculatively.

The Solihull office market, like any other, was challenged by the pandemic. However, lockdowns did not change the overall landscape. The market’s strengths, weaknesses and overarching trends either continued throughout or were suspended only temporarily.

Demand is high – expansions and inward investment are on the menu, alongside the usual churn. The thirst for offices is driven higher still by the post-pandemic trend of refits and relocations. Businesses are looking to improve the quality of their office accommodation – as ESG criteria and skills retention have risen up the agenda.

Whilst we have seen commitments to creating new industrial space along the M42, responding to the delivery boom, office supply has not followed suit. Instead, we saw – and drove – a flurry of refurbishment which delivered some much-needed high quality office stock. Pre-lets for new space then followed – namely those at Blythe Valley Park. However, such opportunities are now thin on the ground.

Ongoing lack of supply now means that some occupiers are having to look elsewhere. These represent missed opportunities for investors and developers, underlining the strong case to invest. Solihull is regarded as a very prosperous area – having fared well during periods of recession – and continues to attract businesses to the area, making it a prime location for opportunities.

Whilst development proposals, such as the NEC Masterplan and Arden Cross, are in the pipeline, the timescales cannot address the short and medium-term issue. We need to see projects that can deliver office space in a shorter timeframe. This requires proactive investors as well as suitable sites with a supportive to planning permission”.

Sustainable Solihull

Solihull's path to Net-Zero

Lowering emissions

- Solihull Council has reported that the total level of emissions from their operations in 2020/21 were 6311 tonnes lower than they were in 2009/10 – a decrease of 69%.
- Covid-19 helped Solihull to take a great leap in lowering its 2020/21 emissions, with the emissions from corporate properties being approximately 500 tonnes lower than their pre-pandemic levels.
- Over one quarter (27%) of Solihull's emissions come from domestic buildings, leading the Council to set up a Solihull Green Homes Grant. Householders in the area who are living in energy inefficient homes can benefit from grants of up to £10,000 to cover the cost of installing energy efficient improvements in their homes.

Green spaces

- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council has committed to planting 250,000 trees over the next ten years through local engagement with schools, residents, businesses and community groups.
- There were 600 hectares of parks and open spaces in the Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council area as of 2019
- Solihull's Urban Forestry Strategy, published in 2019, sets out its plans to protect its urban forest, which consists of over 50,000 trees in parks, 29,500 on highways and 13,060 housing trees.

Cleaner air

- In Q3 of 2021, 10,175 electric vehicles were registered in the Solihull Local Authority area, accounting for 15% of registered electric vehicles in the Midlands region (East and West).
- Solihull is in the top 20% of authorities in the UK for electric vehicle charge point provision, with 119 accessible as of Q3 2021.
- Solihull Council was the first Local Authority in the country to purchase its very own fully electric autonomous shuttle, which was initially trialled at the NEC in 2021.



Sustainability in practice



Anchor Institutions

80% of The NEC Group's food and beverage suppliers can be found within a 30-mile radius of the venue

Solihull Council's carbon emissions from streetlights decreased by 92% from 2009/10

GBSLEP have launched a Clean Growth Programme that provides grant funding to cover up to £4,000 for a local consultant to help evaluate businesses and develop a report that can help pave the way to clean, commercial growth.

Jaguar Land Rover's new logistics facility is net-zero carbon in its construction and they worked with climate action charities to measure and reduce the building's whole-life carbon footprint.



Education

Solihull College and University Centre has a team of 60 staff and students who are 'Green Champions'

Solihull Council have launched the Greener Solihull School Awards which challenge staff and students to make their school more eco-friendly

The Council has a Schools' Sustainability Engagement Officer to advise schools on how to become more sustainable



Business Parks

Birmingham Business Park have been awarded two Gold Green Apple Awards in 2018 and 2019 for their sustainability initiatives

In August 2020, Blythe Valley Business Park became a regional testbed for sensor-controlled streetlights, which was designed to reduce the use of electricity by up to 62.5%



Tony Elvin

General Manager,
Touchwood

“There have been a number of challenges for the Solihull retail community over the last two years. In the weeks leading up to the first lockdown, Touchwood and similar shopping centres found themselves in a limbo period.

We kept our tenants informed with a weekly update containing the latest guidance and how to follow it, latest infection rates, footfall and news. We became adept at quickly changing our operating procedures to adapt and footfall in Touchwood and Solihull outperformed the UK average by 15%.

We lost 15% of our tenants during the height of the pandemic but this could have been much worse. Due to the support we provided each of our occupiers to help ‘keep the lights on’, we were able to attract new tenants and by the end of May 2022, we will deliver a 95% tenant occupancy with more businesses trading than pre pandemic.

All of this was possible due to an unrivalled collaboration between local stakeholders, Solihull council, the Police, Business Improvement District and Chambers of Commerce”.

“In the last two years the biggest challenge to our organisation has been business development. With everyone working from home in a hybrid working pattern now it makes business development and face to face meetings very difficult. We have continued to grow but this has been built very much on referrals and recommendations rather than new business won through more traditional methods. The impact has been felt by our Sales team which has unfortunately resulted in us reducing the size of our sales team through natural attrition.

We have focused on areas of our business that we are most experienced in and expanded our portfolio of clients through case studies, marketing and referrals. As a result we have secured more new business and increased our share of business across existing customers. We have continued to grow our UK Solihull based team to bolster our delivery capability.

Solihull is a great place to invest with a great source of talent, excellent transport connections with the airport, train station and motorway network and the future hub of HS2 making wider UK travel so much more accessible. Through the chamber we have been successful in collaborating with more local Solihull based companies working with Phoebus Software, West Midlands Combined Authority and AX Group”.



Wendy Merricks
CEO, Jumar

On the Horizon

Solihull is geographically located at the centre of the UK and is set to be at the forefront of a number of major projects taking place over the next decade.



HS2

“HS2 will transform Britain’s railways, creating more capacity for local services and freight. It will connect our major population centres, which will boost productivity across the Midlands and the North. It will also contribute to the UK’s carbon reduction journey; HS2 will be zero carbon from day one of operation and offer passengers a fast, reliable alternative to travelling by car or plane.

Solihull and the West Midlands will be at the heart of the network, and once completed, Interchange Station will become one of the best connected in the whole of the UK. It is already setting new standards for construction, and is the first railway station globally to achieve the BREEAM ‘Outstanding’ certification- putting it in the top 1% of buildings in the UK for eco-friendly credentials. The station will support 70,000 new and existing jobs and create 650,000m2 of commercial space (bigger than Paradise, Arena Central and Brindley place combined).

Businesses from across the region are already benefitting from the construction of the new railway. We expect HS2 to generate in the region of 400,000 contract opportunities during the construction of Phase One of the project. It is an exciting time for businesses from across Solihull, and we are proud of our role in the future growth of the town and the wider region.”

- David Speight, Project Client Director, HS2

UK Central Hub

The UK Central Hub is a globally-renowned point of connection at the heart of the national motorway network, comprising a set of major infrastructure and economic assets that are set to become one of the most exciting and accessible growth opportunities in Europe. It is home to Birmingham Airport, Birmingham Business Park, Birmingham International Station, Jaguar Land Rover, the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) and the 340-acre Arden Cross development site which will host the new HS2 Interchange Station. Led by the Urban Growth Company, the 2030+ vision for UK Central Hub is for it to become an environment which delivers up to 8,000 new homes, while adding £6.2bn GVA per annum to the local economy.

“The Hub is one of the most exciting, ambitious and deliverable investment opportunities in Europe. No other group of development opportunities - either in place or planned - benefit from the combination of location, connectivity, infrastructure, environment and people on this scale. And that’s before the first HS2 train even arrives here. Indeed, The Hub is already home to Changan Auto, Fujitsu and Rolls Royce.

“The work underway and planned over the next decade is going to create Europe’s best-connected destination for business, leisure and living; The Hub will become a new and outstanding gateway to the UK which creates jobs, homes, connectivity and opportunities for local people. Now is the time to join this thrilling journey as The Hub becomes an internationally renowned destination.”

- Nigel Hudson, Strategy and Planning Director, UGC





Commonwealth Games

“The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games is a once in a lifetime opportunity to put our region and our people on the global stage.

Birmingham 2022 will bring people together through sport and culture, boost our recovery from the pandemic and leave a significant legacy. Our Games has already created a huge number of jobs for local people and opportunities for businesses to win contracts.

The Business and Tourism Programme will capitalise on the significant economic opportunities from the Games. It will create a long-term legacy by boosting awareness of the West Midlands as a world-class destination for trade, investment, and tourism.

As we enter the final countdown to the Games, we’re encouraging businesses to get ready and to plan ahead. With more than one million tickets sold, a region-wide festival of culture underway, the Queen’s Baton Relay coming back to the region very soon and festival sites that will be open across the region during the Games, there are many ways to connect and embrace the Commonwealth Games.”

- David Grady, CFO, Birmingham 2022

Councillor Courts’ Comment

Ian Courts, Leader of the Council and Lead Member for the Economy, Solihull Council



“It is no surprise that the COVID pandemic was our greatest challenge over the past two years. The Council was called upon to play a pivotal role in keeping residents safe and supporting businesses to survive the economic impact caused by the pandemic.

We were clear that supporting economic recovery would remain a huge priority for us. We are continuing to invest in people and places, Solihull Town Centre, Kingshurst regeneration, working with businesses in Shirley,

developing a new vision for Chelmsley Wood town centre.

We have a huge wave of infrastructure investment, HS2 and the Hub, Junction 6 M42 and public transport schemes, all reinforcing our UK Central proposition of being the best connected area in the UK. It means we are on track to creating thousands of new jobs and business opportunities. However, we will work hard to retain the character of the borough, what makes Solihull so special and so attractive to those living, working and investing here.

We’ve also taken great strides in the other challenge of our time, Climate Change and our aim to be a net zero region by 2041. Recently we were lauded as one of the leading Councils in England for our work on these issues.

I see climate change as a huge business opportunity. I know from my work at the GBSLEP and WMCA that the West Midlands is at the forefront of many new technologies, with the chance to be world leaders providing solutions to climate change.”

“What an exciting time to be a business on Solihull soil! With the HS2 on the horizon, and the Interchange Station in proximity to us here at the business park, we’re one of the most well-connected business locations in the UK. We’re sat at the heart of the national motorway network and are adjacent with the airport and Birmingham International Train Station which together means we’re within three hours of 75% of the whole UK population!



Lori Henebury

Marketing, Community and Business Development Manager, Birmingham Business Park

We’re part of The Hub which comprises of key stakeholders here in Solihull, including us, the NEC, Birmingham Airport, Birmingham International Station, and Jaguar Land Rover. This ambitious project will put us and Solihull on the international map as one of the most attractive investment opportunities in Europe.

Here at Birmingham Business Park, set within 148 acres of parkland and comprised of 2.4m sq ft of high-quality office space, we are home to more than 115 companies with circa 9,000 employees. The pandemic allowed for a lot of those employees to work from home which hit our retail offerings the hardest. We pride ourselves on offering our tenants a wide range of on-site amenities, many of which reduced trading during the Pandemic. We continued to engage our community and have since reopened our on-site café and our face-to-face community events are now back up and running. With plans for increased development and investment, I feel this is a very exciting moment in time for Solihull to bounce back stronger than ever before.”



Ian Taylor

Managing Director, NEC Group Conventions and Exhibitions

“NEC Group’s purpose is ‘bringing live to life’. Creating sustainable destinations of the future, helping customers make every moment count and to build a positive, meaningful legacy. Our people and brands connect every part of the live experience, generating £2 billion per annum in regional economic impact, £1.5 billion of which, is via the NEC in Solihull.

Despite not being able to host events of scale for 15 months, careful financial management ensured the business survived the pandemic and avoided a catastrophic impact on the region’s leisure and business tourism offer and supply chain. The Group continues to face challenges of price volatility, cost increases and a highly competitive labour market but we have an ambitious plan to boost profits back to pre-pandemic levels. By the end of May, we will have hosted 123 events across our three NEC Campus venues (NEC, Vox and Resorts World Arena) this financial year.

Our presence is a key investment driver in the borough. The next ten years will see the Group harness the power of the real estate we have to offer with the NEC Masterplan. This will transform the Campus into a competitive destination to work, rest, live and play; the 5,000 new, mixed-tenure homes being a major contributor to supporting local housing targets. We will also continue to build on our connectivity with the transformational growth impact of HS2”.

References

People and Skills

- Nomis, Labour Market Profile- Solihull
- Nomis, Labour Market Profile- West Midlands
- Nomis, Labour Market Profile- Great Britain (also includes UK stats)
- Nomis, Local Area Report- Solihull
- Nomis, Annual Population Survey dataset
- ONS, Mid-year population estimates
- Department for Education, GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics
- ONS, Regional gross disposable household income, UK: 1997 to 2019
- ONS, Exploring local income deprivation
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, The Story of Solihull 2020
- ONS, Earnings and working hours

Business Environment

- Nomis, Labour Market Profile- Solihull
- Nomis, Labour Market Profile- West Midlands
- Nomis, Labour Market Profile- Great Britain (also includes UK stats)
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, The Solihull Economy 2021
- WMCA State of the Region 2021 Supplementary Report
- ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) per head and income components
- ONS, UK Business: activity, size and location
- KWB, M42/Solihull office market 2021 review

Sustainable Solihull

- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Carbon Report 2020/21
- Midlands Connect, LA Carbon Baseline Profile
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Urban Forestry Strategy 2019-2029
- The NEC Group, Sustainability Policy

On the Horizon

- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Town Centre Energy Network
- Arden Cross, Masterplan and Vision
- Urban Growth Company, The Hub
- Birmingham 2022, Legacy Plan

About Solihull Chamber of Commerce

The Solihull Chamber of Commerce exists to connect, support and grow organisations from any sector across the Solihull area. Our members are from a vast range of sectors, making our network uniquely diverse and strong. Membership is at the heart of everything we do and there is no better way for the Solihull Chamber of Commerce to help your organisation connect, support and grow than by becoming a member. As part of our membership offering, we run a wide variety of professional, yet informal, business events. They include social and professional networking events, business exhibitions, speaker breakfasts and industry forums. All have the aim of offering a platform for businesses to connect and make new contacts, whilst having the opportunity to learn from business experts and link with like-minded people and organisations.

About Prime Accountants Group

Prime Accountants Group is one of the West Midlands' leading independent firms of chartered accountants, forensic accountants, and business and financial advisors. We are always available to simplify the complex, cut through the jargon, and provide accurate, honest advice to help our clients prosper over the long-term. For businesses and individuals that require accountancy and wealth management services, Prime provide straight talking, jargon free, pragmatic advice. Prime simplify complex requirements to help clients focus on growing their business and wealth over the long-term. For more information about Prime Accountants Group, please visit www.primeaccountants.co.uk

About This Report

This report was produced by the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce (GBCC) Policy and Strategic Relationships team. For more information on the GBCC's Insight and Intelligence Services, please contact:

Beth Clewes,
Insight and Intelligence Services Manager,
Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce,
B.Clewes@birmingham-chamber.com

Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce
75 Harborne Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 3DH
t 0121 607 0809
e policy@birmingham-chamber.com
w greaterbirminghamchambers.com

Sponsored by:
prime
ACCOUNTANTS GROUP

Visit our website:



Connect. Support. Grow.

Part of
Greater Birmingham
Chambers
of Commerce

The logo for Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, featuring a stylized 'B' with a teal circle inside, and a small plant-like icon below it.