



Solihull
Chamber
of Commerce



DOING BUSINESS IN SOLIHULL

An Economic
Snapshot

MARCH 2026

CONNECT. SUPPORT. GROW.

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). 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



PAIGE BOWYER
Policy and Research
Analyst, Greater
Birmingham Chambers of
Commerce

It is my pleasure to present the 2026 edition of the Solihull Economic Snapshot. This report provides an overview of the borough's latest economic performance, highlighting key trends in employment, business activity and investment. It is designed to support local partners, businesses and decision-makers by offering clear insight into Solihull's strengths and the challenges ahead.

Over the past year Solihull has continued to show resilience, with strong employment levels, a highly skilled workforce and a business base that performs well compared with both the wider region and the UK. Start-up activity has increased; high-growth firms remain a notable feature of the local economy and Solihull continues to attract investment across advanced manufacturing, digital services and emerging technology sectors.

Major developments such as HS2, Arden Cross and the transformation of Solihull town centre will play an important role in shaping the borough's future economy. These projects will improve connectivity, create new commercial opportunities and support long-term growth across a range of industries.

I hope this report offers a clear and useful picture of Solihull's economic position in 2026 and supports informed discussion and decision-making across the borough.

FOREWORD



KEVIN JOHNS

Director,
Prime Accountants

Prime Accountants Group is proud to continue our support of the Solihull Economic Snapshot, an essential publication dedicated to tracking and understanding the performance of Solihull Borough. As a business deeply rooted in Solihull Town Centre and committed to serving a wide range of organisations across the borough, we remain heavily invested in the area's continued growth, resilience, and long-term prosperity.

The latest report reinforces Solihull's position as a leading borough within the West Midlands, particularly in areas such as education, average earnings, and housing. Looking ahead, major developments including HS2, the UK Central Hub, and the Mell Square transformation reflect strong business confidence and long-term strategic ambition for the borough.

However, as we embrace the opportunities these transformational projects bring, it is equally important to recognise the immediate needs of our local business community. Insights shared by IM Properties in this year's report highlight a clear priority: a balanced and forward-thinking local plan, one that addresses not only housing requirements but also provides space for business growth supported by integrated transport infrastructure.

As we navigate both current challenges and future opportunities, we must continue working together to ensure Solihull remains a beacon of innovation, opportunity, and shared prosperity. By combining the strengths of our business community, anchor institutions, educational partners, and public sector organisations, we can shape a future where every individual and business has the opportunity to thrive.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to this report, as well as to those who play an ongoing role in supporting Solihull's success. Your dedication and insight continue to drive the borough forward.

SUMMARY

INHABITANTS

221,242

QUALIFIED TO NVQ4+

43.1%

BUSINESSES

8,335

KEY SECTORS

- Administrative and Support Services
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities
- Transport
- Health and Social Activity

KEY ASSETS

- Transport- Highly connected by rail, road and air
- Anchor Institutions- Home to key economic drivers: NEC and HS2
- Education: 14 secondary schools and 2 FE colleges
- Business Parks: Home to Birmingham Business Park and Blythe Valley Business Park
- National Exhibition Centre (NEC)

ON THE HORIZON

- HS2
- UK Central Hub
- Town Centre Master Plan
- UK Telecoms Lab

HOW WE COMPARE

HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

- Employment rate - **76.0%**
- Percentage of the population that is economically active - **80.9%**
- Number of people employed in positions under Standard Occupational Classification Major Groups 1-3 (professional occupations) - **56.5%**
- Job density - **51.9%**
- Residents happy with the neighbourhood they live in - **78%**
- Median gross weekly pay for full time workers - **£766.60**
- Vacancies in the area - **3,499 per year**

IN LINE WITH THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

- Pupils achieving grades 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs - **45.5%**
- Median age - **42**

BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

- Proportion of the population aged 16-64 - **59.6%**
- Unemployment rate - **3.7%**
- Economic inactivity - **19.6%**
- Proportion of the population qualified to RQF 4+ - **43.1%**



**SOLIHULL
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Solihull stands out as one of the UK's most dynamic locations for business and investment. Ranked 7th among the top areas nationally for growth potential, the borough is set for impressive expansion – over 1,400 businesses are projected to grow by 20% in the coming year, supported by world-class infrastructure, a resilient business base, and a highly skilled workforce...

... Home to global brands such as Jaguar Land Rover and Gymshark, Solihull offers a strong foundation in sectors critical to local and national prosperity. Advanced manufacturing and engineering remain core strengths, while life sciences, energy, and digital industries are emerging rapidly. This culture of innovation drives productivity levels among the highest in the UK, creating an environment where businesses can flourish...

... Consistently rated one of the best places to live and raise a family in the UK, Solihull combines strategic location, sectoral strength, and quality of life, creating the perfect conditions to grow and succeed in business.

PEOPLE AND SKILLS

POPULATION

The population of Solihull has grown steadily since the last Solihull Economic Snapshot was published in 2024, increasing by 2.3%. According to 2021 census data, the single largest age group of the population is 50-59 years (13.52%), whereas it was 35-49 years (19.4%) in Birmingham. Looking at ethnicity, 17.8% of Solihull's resident population identify as Black, Asian and minority ethnic. 59.2% of the population of Solihull identify only as British.

	SOLIHULL 2024	CHANGE SINCE 2021	WMCA 2024	CHANGE SINCE 2021	GREAT BRITAIN 2024	CHANGE SINCE 2021
POPULATION	221,242	+2.3%	3,036,605	+4.05%	58,620,101	+3.77%
WORKING AGE POPULATION	59.1%	-0.5ppt	63.4%	+0.2ppt	62.9%	0ppt

EMPLOYMENT

Based on data from the Annual Population Survey (APS), Solihull recorded an employment rate of 77.0% in the 12 months to June 2025, placing it above both the England (75.8%) and West Midlands region averages (74.2%), and significantly higher than the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) average of 70.1%. The confidence interval for Solihull (+/-3.5%) reflects some local variation, but even accounting for this, Solihull continues to outperform wider benchmarks. Across the West Midlands, employment rates varied sharply from 81% in Shropshire and Warwickshire to just 66% in Sandwell and at 77%, Solihull has the highest employment rate among West Midland Metropolitan councils.

Over the 12 months to June 2025, Solihull recorded an unemployment rate of 3.2%, well below the averages for England (4.1%), the West Midlands region (4.8%), and the WMCA area (6.7%). Although APS estimates at local authority level can be less precise due to smaller sample sizes, the data still indicates that Solihull performs strongly compared with both regional and national trends. Across the West Midlands, unemployment ranged from 8.2% in Coventry to 1.8% in Shropshire, placing Solihull among the best-performing areas.

	SOLIHULL	CHANGE SINCE PREVIOUS YEAR	WMCA	CHANGE SINCE PREVIOUS YEAR	ENGLAND	CHANGE SINCE PREVIOUS YEAR
EMPLOYMENT RATE 2025	77.0%	+0.4ppt	70.1%	-0.2ppt	75.8%	+0.1ppt
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 2025	3.2%	0ppt	6.7%	+1.5ppt	4.1%	+0.7ppt
JOBS DENSITY 2022	1.22	+0.05	0.79	+0.01	0.87	+0.03



EMMA-LOUISE HEWITT

Partner,
Sydney Mitchell

As an employment solicitor, looking to the future, national reforms such as the Employment Rights Act 2025 are set to change the employment landscape. Although full implementation will come in 2026–2027, local employers have already begun preparing for changes like day one sick pay and parental leave rights, clearer shift notice rules, and enhanced industrial action protections. These adjustments signal a shift toward a more flexible, fair, and future ready world of work, one that many Solihull businesses are embracing with typical forward thinking energy.

Despite the transition these reforms bring, Solihull’s strong economic fundamentals, resilient business community, and upward momentum offer every reason to feel hopeful. The borough’s continued performance paints an exciting picture: a thriving, high achieving labour market that is well positioned for sustainable growth, innovation, and new opportunities in the years ahead.

Solihull remains a place where businesses can not only succeed but truly flourish.

LARGEST SECTORS BY EMPLOYMENT

The five largest categories of employment by economic sector are:

	SOLIHULL 2024	ENGLAND 2024	LOCATION QUOTIENT
BUSINESS ADMIN AND SUPPORT	21%	9%	2.39
PUBLIC SERVICES	15%	26%	0.58
BUSINESS SERVICES	12%	12%	1.07
MANUFACTURING	11%	7%	1.48
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL	10%	12%	0.80

^ Location Quotient: compares the concentration of jobs in a sector in Solihull to the concentration nationally (i.e. identifies sector specialisations)

Solihull’s employment base is dominated by several key sectors. Business administration and support services form the largest share with 31,000 jobs, followed by public services (22,500), business services (18,000), manufacturing (16,000) and wholesale and retail (14,000). The borough has a notably strong private-sector profile: 90% of Solihull’s jobs (132,000) are in the private sector, compared with 83% nationally, resulting in a private-sector employment density 53% above the England average.

Between 2019 and 2023, the total number of workplace jobs in Solihull increased by 3.5% (+5,000 jobs). This growth, while positive, was more modest than the increases seen across England (+4.5%), the West Midlands region (+4.2%), and the WMCA (+5.6%). Importantly, all of Solihull’s employment growth came from the private sector, where jobs rose by 4% (+5,400) over the period. In contrast, public sector employment declined by 2% (-350 jobs).

SKILLS & EDUCATION

Solihull has a highly qualified population, outperforming both the West Midlands and England across all major qualification levels. 43.1% of residents hold a Level 4+ qualification, a considerably stronger profile than the wider West Midlands, where higher-level attainment lags behind the national average. Solihull also performs well at Levels 1-3, with 88.8% qualified to Level 1, 80.6% to Level 2, and 67.7% to Level 3, all of which sit above regional and national benchmarks. Only 5.8% of Solihull residents have no formal qualifications, compared with 7.3% nationally.

This means that Solihull has one of the most skilled workforces in the West Midlands, providing a stronger talent base for employers than most neighbouring authorities. The borough's above-average qualification levels are a key factor behind its strong employment performance and its attractiveness to high-value industries.

	SOLIHULL	WEST MIDLANDS	ENGLAND
FURTHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS PARTICIPATION, 2024/25	4.97%	5.50%	5.17%
NO FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS, 2024/25	5.8%	10.6%	7.3%

Solihull also performs strongly in formal education outcomes. In the 2023/24 academic year, 77.5% of pupils achieved a grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs, outperforming both the West Midlands average (73.5%) and the England average (76.1%). One reason for these stronger outcomes is Solihull's socio-economic profile; the borough has lower deprivation levels, stronger school performance, and a more stable labour market than many neighbouring authorities, all factors that are consistently linked with higher educational attainment. These advantages help reinforce Solihull's position as one of the most educated areas in the region.

	SOLIHULL	WEST MIDLANDS	ENGLAND
PUPILS ACHIEVING GRADES 5 OR ABOVE IN ENGLISH AND MATHS GCSES, 2023/24 ACADEMIC YEAR	77.5%	73.5%	76.1%
RQF 3+ OR ABOVE QUALIFICATIONS	67.7%	63.6%	67.4%



REBECCA GATER
CEO, Solihull College &
University Centre

As Solihull College & University Centre launches its new strategic plan this year, we reaffirm our mission to be the region's anchor institution for lifelong learning, social mobility, and future skills. Our five strategic ambitions set out a bold commitment not only to excellent teaching and transformative learning, but to contributing meaningfully to the borough's civic and economic future...

... In the 2025/26 academic year, we will have trained more than 12,000 individuals across a diverse range of programmes, from full-time study and apprenticeships to higher education, adult retraining and bespoke employer provision. This scale of impact is integral to our second ambition: establishing Solihull College & University Centre as the region's lifelong learning destination.

Our role extends far beyond preparing young people for their first career step. We support adults returning to education, employees reskilling for green and digital technologies, and employers looking to future proof their organisations. Our higher education offer, flexible, affordable and delivered locally, widens opportunity and strengthens Solihull's long-term skills base.



INCOME AND LIFESTYLE

Solihull continues to demonstrate a comparatively strong economic position relative to both the West Midlands region and the UK. In 2023, median gross weekly pay for workers in Solihull stood at £697, higher than the averages for both the West Midlands (£620) and the UK as a whole (£643). This reinforces Solihull’s status as one of the better-paid labour markets in the region, reflecting its sector mix, higher-skilled workforce, and strong private-sector presence.

Alongside earnings, Solihull’s Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head reached £26,815 in 2023, significantly above both the West Midlands average (£21,141) and the UK average (£21,679). Solihull’s GDHI grew by 16.7% since 2021, a solid increase, although regional GDHI growth (+26.77%) has outpaced Solihull over the same period.

The housing market reflects Solihull’s comparatively high-income profile. As of December 2025, the average house price in Solihull was £332,744, markedly above the West Midlands average (£246,141) and the UK average (£270,259). However, Solihull’s house prices fell by 2.7% since January 2024, contrasting with house price growth across the West Midlands (+5.9%) but not as significant as the overall UK decline (-4.13%). This suggests that affordability pressures and higher mortgage rates may be cooling demand in Solihull more sharply than in the wider region, albeit from a much higher price base.

	SOLIHULL	CHANGE	WEST MIDLANDS	CHANGE	UK	CHANGE
MEDIAN GROSS WEEKLY PAY 2023	£697	n/a	£620	n/a	£643	n/a
GROSS DISPOSABLE HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER HEAD, 2023	£26,815	+16.7% since 2021	£21,141	+26.77%	£21,679	+14.56% since 2021
AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE, DEC 2025	£332,744	-2.7% since Jan 2024	£246,141	+5.9% since Jan 2024	£270,259	-4.13% since Jan 2024



TONY ELVIN
General Manager,
Touchwood Solihull

It was a busy year for lettings as we continued to improve the quality and mix of tenants within the scheme, with over 80,000 sq ft of leasing activity completed.

Strong demand was seen from both new and existing brands, with notable deals including Apple opening a new store – more than tripling its presence at the destination – alongside new arrivals such as Space NK, Sweaty Betty and Lisa Angel.

The pipeline remains positive, with Boots Hearing Care, Moss Bros and Hypnotic Desserts all set to open in the coming weeks, alongside further deals that are not yet ready for disclosure.

We also continue to engage with a strong list of retailers keen to join the scheme, awaiting the right opportunity to secure an appropriate unit and benefit from a highly successful location anchored by John Lewis, which invested £3.5 million in store improvements during the year.

2025 also saw the continued expansion of Touchwood's leisure and restaurant offer, with US burger chain Wendy's, Indian street food brand Indico, and Brazilian-style steakhouse Beleza Rodizio all opening at the scheme. Jubilee Walk, a key dining destination within Touchwood, was among several areas to benefit from investment to enhance the physical environment, including the refurbishment of new customer toilets.

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHICS

Solihull is home to 8,355 businesses, with 8,300 being SMEs.

	SOLIHULL 2024	CHANGE SINCE 2023	WMCA 2024	CHANGE SINCE 2023	GREAT BRITAIN 2024	CHANGE SINCE 2023
Micro (0-9 employees)	89.2%	+0.6ppt	88.7%	-0.2ppt	89.1%	-0.4ppt
Small (10-49 employees)	8.3%	-0.5ppt	9.3%	+0.1ppt	9.0%	+0.4ppt
Medium (50-249 employees)	1.8%	-0.1ppt	1.6%	0ppt	1.6%	+0.1ppt
Large (250+ employees)	0.6%	-0.1ppt	0.5%	0ppt	0.4%	0ppt

Solihull's business demographics show a balanced and resilient local economy. The business birth rate is 9.7%, slightly below England (11.2%) and the West Midlands (11.8%), however, the business death rate of 9.6% also sits below both England (9.9%) and the region (10.6%). This combination suggests a stable business environment, where churn is lower and businesses are marginally more likely to remain active than elsewhere.

At the same time, Solihull performs strongly in terms of business growth quality. High-growth firms make up 5.2% of local businesses, compared with 5.0% nationally and 4.2% across the West Midlands, indicating that Solihull not only supports business survival but also provides conditions where firms are more likely to scale successfully.

	SOLIHULL START-UPS	START-UP RATE SOLIHULL	START-UP RATE ENGLAND	START-UP RATE WMCA
2022	930	42.7	52.6	52.3
2023	1,090	49.3	48.1	46.4

Start-up rate is calculated per 10,000 of the population

The business birth rate measures the number of new firms created as a proportion of all existing businesses, whereas the start-up rate reflects new business formations per head of the population, meaning the two indicators capture growth from different perspectives. Solihull has experienced steady growth in new business formation, with start-ups increasing from 930 in 2022 to 1,090 in 2023. This lifted the borough's start-up rate from 42.7 to 49.3 per 10,000 residents, meaning Solihull now sits above both the England average (48.1) and the WMCA average (46.4). The figures indicate a strengthening local business landscape and suggest that Solihull is becoming an increasingly active environment for relatively new employers.

EMPLOYMENT LAND IN SOLIHULL

Solihull is entering an important phase of planning for future employment land as work progresses on the new Local Plan. The Call for Sites exercise held between November 2024 and January 2025 generated over 300 submissions from landowners and developers, including sites promoted for employment, industrial and commercial use. This is the broadest recent assessment of Solihull's potential development land and reflects strong market interest in expanding the borough's economic footprint.

These sites are now being assessed as part of the 2026 Issues and Options consultation, where the Council will determine how much employment land Solihull needs and which areas should be prioritised for future economic growth. None of the submitted sites are confirmed for development at this stage; they represent availability only, and the Council will evaluate their suitability, environmental impacts and alignment with wider spatial strategy before allocating any employment land in the emerging plan.

Future employment land provision is expected to be closely linked to Solihull's key economic assets, particularly the UK Central Hub, which includes Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Jaguar Land Rover and Birmingham Business Park. This cluster is identified as a major driver of regional employment and investment, and Solihull's economic reports highlight that it will remain central to long-term job creation and business expansion. The borough's historically strong business performance and high-value sectors reinforce the importance of ensuring a well-planned pipeline of employment land to support future economic growth.



LEWIS PAYNE

Development Director,
IM Properties

Solihull has always been a great place to be. A great place to live and a great place to do business. It has the strategic advantage of being located at the centre of the country with excellent connections to motorways, railways, and air travel, whilst at the same time enjoying the feel of a market town in the country, which ensures its residents enjoy a high quality of life.

But in recent years, Solihull has become a victim of its own success. A high level of demand for new homes and business space is being strangled by a lack of supply. This problem is largely down to the West Midlands Green Belt, which tightly wraps the Borough, but it has been exacerbated by a policy void, with a lack of regional guidance and Solihull failing to put an adequate Local Plan in place to allocate new employment sites...

... These businesses have great potential to generate diverse employment opportunities adding to the skills base and general prosperity of Solihull. We desperately need more opportunities for these businesses to grow. There is limited scope for refurbishment of existing buildings and 'brownfield' development, and so there is a responsibility for the Council to identify new opportunities for sustainable development that will allow Solihull to continue to prosper.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Solihull's position within the UK Central Hub, home to Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Jaguar Land Rover, and Birmingham Business Park, gives the borough a uniquely strong platform for international trade and global connectivity. These assets mean that Solihull plays an outsized role within the regional export economy despite its relatively small population base. Solihull's economy is dominated by internationally-orientated industries such as advanced manufacturing, automotive engineering, professional services and ICT, all of which contribute significantly to the West Midlands' export performance.



IAN TAYLOR
Managing Director,
Exhibitions, NEC Group

The NEC's bounce-back has been remarkable since the pandemic. Businesses are returning to in person events with renewed purpose, and it's clear from feedback that meeting face to face builds trust and relationships in ways digital platforms simply can't replicate.

Every event held here contributes to Solihull's position as a gateway for international business. Across the country, the scale of the business events sector is extraordinary – in 2024 alone, an estimated 1,145 exhibitions and conferences at the UK's main venues attracted 7.2 million visitors. In 2025, we welcomed nearly 25,000 exhibitors and more than a million visitors through our doors. These interactions power the strength of UK PLC, fuelling growth, exports, and innovation across multiple sectors.

Our major international trade shows highlight the NEC's unique contribution to global commerce. Events such as Multimodal, MACH, and Spring Fair attract international buyers, suppliers and delegations, providing a platform for UK businesses to showcase their products and expertise to the world.

The Solihull Economic Narrative highlights that the borough consistently outperforms much of the West Midlands in high-value sectors and business productivity, with firms linked into global supply chains, particularly through Jaguar Land Rover's international manufacturing and export operations. This alone positions Solihull as a key contributor to the West Midlands' place as the UK's second-largest exporting region, driven by automotive and transport manufacturing. Alongside this, professional and business services located in Solihull also feed into national and international markets, reinforcing the borough's role as a centre for globally-traded services.

Looking ahead, Solihull's ambitions for expanding international trade focus on strengthening the economic potential of UK Central and leveraging major infrastructure assets, including Birmingham Airport's planned growth and the arrival of HS2, both of which are expected to increase the borough's global connectivity and attractiveness to international investors. The Council's economic strategy emphasises continued development of high-value, trade-intensive sectors, recognising that Solihull's international competitiveness is tied to innovation-driven industries, skilled labour and strategic investment sites. These ambitions align closely with regional WMCA priorities to increase export activity and support globally competitive industries across the West Midlands.



NICK BARTON
CEO, Birmingham Airport

Last year was our most successful to date. We welcomed a record 13.6 million passengers and invested record levels of capital into our infrastructure.

... Beyond the visible passenger experience, BHX also delivered its strongest year for cargo – a critical service for local businesses that often flies under the radar. In partnership with our cargo operators, we handled more than 60,000 tonnes of freight last year, an increase of over 10% on 2024. By responding to a changing market and capacity constraints in the South of England, the airport has strengthened its position as a key cargo gateway. Today, BHX supports a growing schedule of dedicated daily and weekly cargo flights, totalling over 30 every week...

... While leisure travel will always form the majority of our activity, aviation today is a critical enabler of global commerce – keeping manufacturing supply chains moving and ensuring access to goods essential to everyday life. Growth in cargo, combined with capacity constraints at other UK airports, means BHX is well positioned to develop further as a logistics gateway, handling increasing volumes of freight whether it arrives by air or road.



TECH AND INNOVATION

Solihull is rapidly emerging as one of the UK's strongest locations for technology-driven business growth. New analysis from Growth Flag (2026) ranked Solihull 7th nationally for high-growth business potential, with 10% of local firms predicted to grow by 20% or more, outperforming the national average of 9%. The report attributes this to Solihull's expanding ecosystem of innovative companies, ranging from established global players like Jaguar Land Rover and Gymshark to a growing cluster of firms in clean tech, digital services and automotive innovation. This blend of high-value manufacturing and digital-first businesses reinforces Solihull's position as a leading hub for innovation in the West Midlands.



PHIL WEBB
CEO and Co-founder,
VU AI

AI is often framed as futuristic. In practice, the most valuable AI is “boring” in the best sense. It reduces delays, removes repetitive work and helps people make decisions with more clarity. For local employers, that can mean quicker customer responses, better forecasting, fewer errors in finance and admin, improved maintenance planning and more consistent service delivery. The gains might look incremental, but they compound. Over time, they become the difference between keeping pace and pulling ahead.

Solihull is well placed to benefit. Advanced manufacturing and engineering sit alongside professional services, logistics, retail, hospitality and a growing digital economy. Strong transport links, including Birmingham Airport, the NEC and the wider motorway and rail network, connect local firms to customers, talent and supply chains. Innovation thrives where ideas and goods can move quickly, and where organisations can collaborate across sectors.

One of the most significant developments in Solihull's tech landscape is the creation of the UK Telecoms Lab (UKTL) at UK Central. This government-backed facility will act as a secure national testbed for next-generation telecoms and cybersecurity, creating up to 50 skilled tech jobs by 2025. Positioned as a key asset in the UK's ambition to become a “science and technology superpower,” the lab is expected to support research, resilience testing and innovation across 5G and future communications technologies. It is the first facility of its kind in the UK and strengthens Solihull's growing reputation as a strategic centre for digital infrastructure and advanced connectivity.

Beyond digital infrastructure, Solihull is also becoming a focal point for large-scale innovation-led regeneration. As part of the major Arden Cross development next to the HS2 Interchange, partners have announced plans for a £3.2 billion Health Technology Campus, led jointly by Muse and the University of Warwick. This emerging Innovation District will bring together healthcare technology, research, commercial labs and new digital-health enterprises. It forms a core pillar of one of the UK's largest regeneration projects and is expected to attract significant investment, high-skilled jobs and new tech-led businesses into the borough.

Taken together, these developments indicate that Solihull is firmly establishing itself as a regional leader in technology and innovation, driven by high-growth firms, major digital infrastructure investments and the creation of new strategic innovation districts. With assets such as UK Central, HS2, the NEC, and an expanding base of digital, automotive and clean-tech businesses, Solihull is positioned to play an increasingly important role in the West Midlands' and UK's future tech economy.



CRAIG POTTS

Marketing Manager,
Hubtel IT

The cost of doing business continues to rise for organisations across Solihull and the wider West Midlands...

... Despite these pressures, Solihull's business community continues to show strong adaptability. Rather than standing still, local organisations are investing in technology, strengthening infrastructure, and developing strategies that reduce risk and improve performance. The focus has shifted from reacting to challenges as they arise, to pro-actively building long-term resilience through smarter, more secure systems.

As a technology consultancy covering Cyber Security, Cloud, IT Services, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), Hubtel IT has seen a clear shift among Solihull businesses towards using technology as a strategic asset. Organisations are realising that investing in the right solutions not only helps protect against risk but also delivers measurable gains in efficiency, collaboration, and innovation.



ON THE HORIZON

HS2 INTERCHANGE & ARDEN CROSS DEVELOPMENT

HS2's Interchange Station at the UK Central Hub is one of the largest infrastructure investments in the region and is expected to transform Solihull's connectivity, bringing London within 40 minutes and creating a major national transport gateway. The wider Arden Cross development surrounding the station includes plans for new offices, housing, commercial space and a major Innovation District. Recent proposals include the aforementioned £3.2 billion Health Technology Campus, developed with the University of Warwick, which will anchor a new tech-led cluster and create thousands of high-skilled jobs.

SOLIHULL TOWN CENTRE TRANSFORMATION - WESTGATE & MELL SQUARE

Solihull Council is progressing ambitious plans to redevelop key parts of the town centre. The Westgate development at 21 Homer Road aims to deliver new commercial, leisure and public-realm space in a strategic location close to the train station, creating a more modern town-centre environment attractive to investors and employers.

Additionally, Muse Developments has submitted plans to regenerate Mell Square into a new mixed-use neighbourhood featuring up to 1,600 homes, flexible workspaces and green public spaces, representing one of the biggest regeneration schemes in the borough in decades. Construction on the first phase is expected to begin in 2026, subject to planning approval.

UK TELECOMS LAB (UKTL)

As detailed earlier in this report the UK Telecoms Lab is being established at UK Central Solihull as the UK's first dedicated facility for testing the future of mobile networks and cybersecurity. Its presence positions Solihull as a strategic node in the UK's digital infrastructure and tech-innovation landscape.

UK CENTRAL HUB GROWTH PLANS

Beyond HS2, the broader UK Central Hub continues to receive investment through a series of major projects that will shape Solihull's future economic growth. These include enhancements around Birmingham Airport, expansion opportunities linked to the NEC, and new inward-investment propositions focused on clean growth, advanced manufacturing and digital connectivity. The Hub remains one of the UK's most strategically important development areas, offering exceptional transport links and a strong platform for international business activity.

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Emerging Local Plan | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

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