

Nuneaton – Great British Railways Headquarters
Expression of Interest

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
COMPETITION FOR GREAT BRITISH
RAILWAYS



Coventry & Warwickshire – Future Transport Technology



A word from our supporters

It is my firm belief that for Great British Railways to succeed it needs to be mindful of its pedigree without being constrained in any way by its past. Therefore the opportunity to look to the future from a location that is not in any way impinged by its history is one that is not to be dismissed lightly. Nuneaton is such a location. Warwickshire is a great County with a dynamic and forward looking approach to business, innovation and skills.

Nuneaton itself is really well connected in terms of local, regional, national and international transport and infrastructure links. There is a dynamic, experienced, diverse and highly skilled workforce readily available. The national railway supply chain is within easy reach of this vibrant Midlands location.

In conclusion I feel Nuneaton is uniquely placed to bring a wide range of supply chain excellence to GBR from a location that is forward looking, resting in a County with an enviable track record in its support to business and collectively a place to build a truly Great British Railway from.

Colin Flack OBE MSc



Background

A former senior Army Officer and Entrepreneur who has spent the last 20 years building a series of successful railway based businesses in Warwickshire and Nationally; and helping others do the same. In 2021 Colin was awarded the OBE in the Queens Birthday Honours list for services to the Railway Supply Chain; including the formation and leadership of the Rail Alliance, the creation of Rail Live (the largest outdoor railway trade show in Europe) and the development of the UK's only independent Test Track facility all based in Warwickshire. He is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham, Centre for Rail Research and Education.

Who else is involved in developing and supporting your application?

The EOI application is supported, developed and promoted by local council Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council, and Warwickshire County Council, the transport authority, and the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership. We are engaging local industry partners.

- Marcus Jones MP
- Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- Coventry & Warwickshire LEP
- Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
- Local Supply Chain, including Oleo International, Vivarail and Motorail.



A word from our supporters

"We're excited by the opportunities presented by the relocation from London and the South East of the Great British Railways HQ. This major relocation investment will present major transformational change to the relocation destination, in terms of office occupation, town centre footfall and skills, levelling up and aspiration. A Nuneaton base provides excellent access around the UK from a central location, and opportunities for Great British Railways to access the new and cutting edge rail technologies being developed across the Midlands. It will also provide a catalyst for further redevelopment of this important Midlands town of Nuneaton.

We at the Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce will work with Great British Railways and other industry and public stakeholders to make a great success of the relocation and support the development of a modern and safe railway network for the UK".

**Tom Mongan, President,
Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce**



"The transformation of railways in the UK will see significant changes to the benefit of customers. Announced by the Secretary of State for Transport in May 2021, Great British Railways will represent new leadership of the industry.

We at Vivarail will play a vital role in delivering the global agenda to decarbonisation railways by delivering zero emission solutions to the market both nationally and internationally. As a local innovative organisation based in Southam Warwickshire, we are committed to supporting the local economy through jobs and working closely with our many partners in the Midlands.

The opportunity presented by the GBR transition team to create a Headquarters outside of London is welcome and we are particularly keen to see the new face of the railway industry based close by in Nuneaton. The new HQ will be an integral part of the cultural change as well as being a magnet for retaining some incredible skills as well as attracting new talent to the area. The Midlands has a great railway heritage and this exciting once in a generation reform is our opportunity to place the heartbeat of the railways back where it belongs".

**Steve McBride
Managing Director, Vivarail**



Nuneaton – Local Rail Supply Chain

Images, left to right: Oleo tower in Exhall, the Coventry VLR; Revolution Train at Long Marston; Hydroflex; The Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre, fromabove; Vivarail battery trains for delivery in Wales



Nuneaton – Centrally Located within Rail Supply



Rail Cluster:

1. Network Rail RIDC at Tuxford and Melton
2. Rail Forum Midlands
3. MIRA Technology Park
4. Oleo International
5. HS2 HQ in Birmingham
6. Rail Alliance
7. University of Birmingham BCRRE
8. Network Rail Westwood Business Park
9. Network Rail ROC
10. Vivarail
11. TDI International
12. Porterbrook/ Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre
13. Rail Live
14. Raitex (NEC)

Cluster of Technology and R&D Assets



Context

1. Describe the location of your application and your proposed headquarters site

Describe the geographical area covered by the application and why it should be considered for hosting the headquarters?

Introduction

Nuneaton is the largest town in Warwickshire, with a population of 86,552, and 3 million people living within just 20 miles of the town. With Bedworth forms the borough of Nuneaton & Bedworth. With the county of Warwickshire it is part of the Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership area, and a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

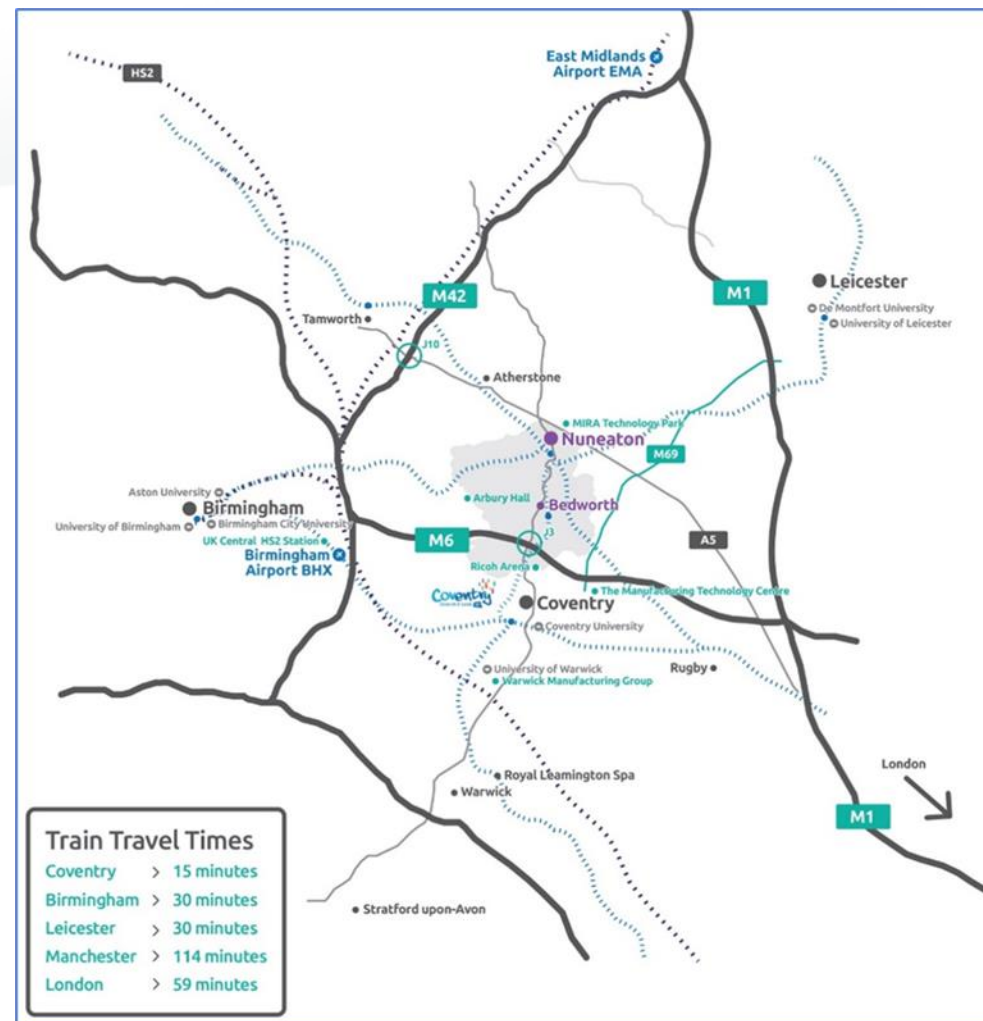
The town is famous as the birthplace of the Victorian novelist George Eliot, who lived there from 1819 to 1841. It is also part of a wider Coventry & Warwickshire cluster of transport technology, spanning from MIRA Technology Park to the north, down to Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre to the south and WMG at the University of Warwick to the East. Beyond that, it is well placed centrally within the Midlands Rail cluster of Derby to the north and the West Midlands to the West and Leicestershire to the East. (see map)

Strategic Transport Location

Nuneaton enjoys a strategic location at the heart of the major road and rail network, and just a 30-40mins drive to Birmingham International and East Midlands Airports. Luton Airport can be reached in less than 90mins.

With seven platforms, and 1.4m passengers per year, Nuneaton train station in the town centre is one of the largest in the region outside of Birmingham New Street. The station lies between Birmingham, Coventry and Leicester, East/West and is also connected directly to Nuneaton has excellent short direct links to Birmingham, Coventry & Leicester, and direct links further out to London, Liverpool Stansted, Cambridge and directions north via Crewe.

Rail freight is increasingly important nationally, with locally Midlands Engine Rail and the free port at East Midlands Airport. Nuneaton is a short distance from BIFT (Birmingham Intermodal Freight Hub), DIRFT (Daventry Intermodal Rail Freight Hub) and Hams Hall Rail Freight Terminal (ABP), and there is a new rail freight hub in development at Exhall.



Context

1. Describe the location of your application and your proposed headquarters site (continued)

Describe the geographical area covered by the application and why it should be considered for hosting the headquarters? (continued)

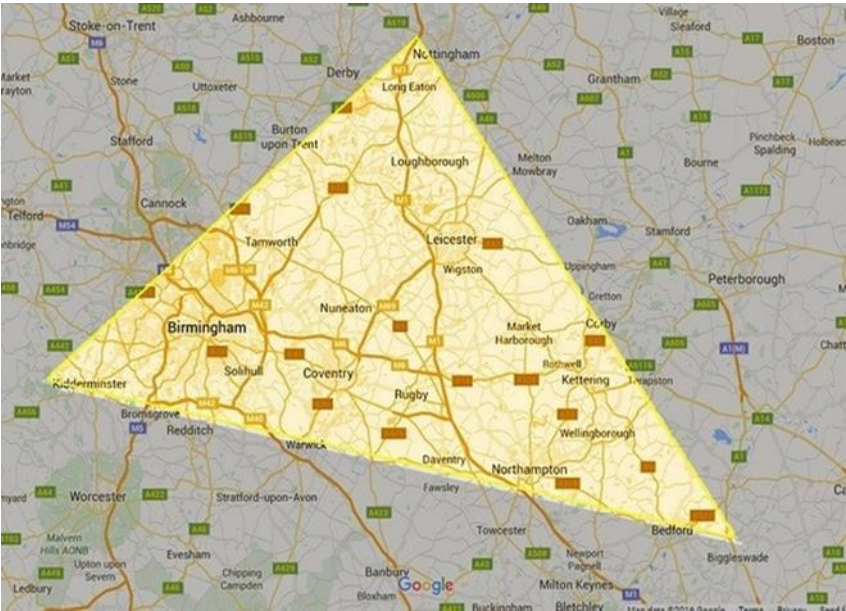
Nuneaton is well-positioned for commuters within the national transport network, with fast rail links to London and Birmingham and easy access to the M1, M6 and M42. The A5 runs along the northern boundary and the A444, A4254 and the B4114 are the major routes within the borough.

It is well located for local, regional and national rail supply chain, close to five major universities to the West, including University of Birmingham BCRRE, and three to the East. It is also mainline station for MIRA Technology Park, a major national centre for transport technologies. The town is close to HS2 HQ in Birmingham (30mins by train and on foot) and close to other Network Rail assets Rugby Operating Centre (ROC) and Network Rail Training Centre (Coventry).

Nuneaton’s strategic location is illustrated by inclusion in the logistics “Golden Triangle” providing an optimum location for logistics companies with access to over 90% of the UK population within 4 hours drive. The borough is home major logistics companies such as DB Schenker, XPO, Gist and Saputo Dairy Crest, and most recently Hello Fresh, who chose the location for its excellent transport links.

Nuneaton is already a head office location for major brands like Holland & Barrett, Fedex and Cadent Gas. Most recently, REE chose the town for its new UK HQ Design and development centre. We are currently negotiating with another international company who wish to locate their UK headquarters in Nuneaton.

The proposed location for the HQ places the offices in the town centre, close to the rail station for ease of access, and the development will become a major driver of investment and regeneration within the town.



Sector	Business units (1)		Employment numbers (2)	
	2015	2020	2015	2019
Local transport and transport by pipeline (SIC 49)	245	320	1,500	1,500
Water transport (SIC 50)	0	0	0	10
Warehousing and support activities for transport (SIC 52)	30	50	600	1,750
Postal and courier activities (SIC 53)	70	80	1750	700
Total	345	450	3,850	3,960

Source: Based on (1) UK Business Counts (local units by industry and employment size band) (NOMIS) (2) Business Register and Employment Survey NOMIS. Note: NOMIS data shows some anomalies regarding employment data for Industry Group H (Transport and Logistics). Data for industry sub-sectors does not sum to the same total as for the Industry Group.

Context

1. Describe the proposed site(s) for the national headquarters

The train station area has been an area identified for re-development supported through key infrastructure improvements to the highway network and creation of a station gateway.

The sites identified for this office campus development are well located for the town mainline station and looks to reinvigorate the station area through high quality office accommodation, the creation of a new entrance to the train station to promote greater use and an increase in active travel, and new, high quality links into the town centre itself, a short 5 minute walk away. Key improvement works to the highway network, new improved public realm and a new cycle route to the area are all funded and will be implemented within the next 5 years providing the key infrastructure needed to support any new development.

Our Station Masterplan creates a 'strategic' 'indicative' masterplan for the train station area of Nuneaton which will help promote, guide and maximise the future development and potential of this area of the town centre. The masterplan will look to create a gateway into Nuneaton, recognising its strong position on the rail network, maximising the growth that is taking place in the local area (housing and economic) and the new developments in the town centre.

We have successfully bid for more than £13 million funding from the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) to support the delivery of the Abbey Street development which includes a new Hampton by Hilton hotel, mixed leisure provision, a new public square with Food Hall and a new Digital Skills and Innovation training centre. The fund is also supporting the development of the Bridge to Living Scheme which will replace poor 1970's retail provision with new Live to Work units, housing and will provide a green link from our destination Riversley Park, into Nuneaton town centre.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, in partnership with Warwickshire County Council and the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP have undertaken site assembly around Vicarage Street, and we are in the final phases of design to deliver new residential accommodation and a contemporary Library and Business Centre.



Context

1. Describe the location of your application and your proposed headquarters site

What benefits do you expect your town/city will gain from accommodating the headquarters?

The town will be transformed by this relocation in a number of ways: the town will benefit from the footfall the office scheme will bring; it will benefit the local rail and transport technology supply chain; it will raise aspiration and skills opportunities for a town still dealing with a legacy of coal mining; it will bring new residents into the town and surrounding area, and attract new talent to the area, raising the profile and diversifying the local economy;

The HQ development provides synergies and links to expand the achievements to date from the Transforming Nuneaton Programme described above. The vision is to create a vibrant, attractive and prosperous town centre that offers a range of opportunities for everyone.

What do you think makes your town/city best suited as the location for Great British Railways' national headquarters?

Many centres claim a central location, but the Nuneaton offer is unique in terms of the excellent transport links, proximity to key rail assets and partners, and a location within a transport technology cluster. In terms of rail, air, road and green travel, there are few large towns that can list up such a strong mix of modal options. Nuneaton is located in an area with history in rail, but also businesses and universities at the cutting edge of nascent rail and mass transit technologies.

No county has more motorway options, including M1/M6/ M40/M42/M69 and onward connections.

Nuneaton is also a short drive from both Birmingham International Airport and East Midlands Airport, with further options at Luton and London less than 2 hours by motorway. Warwickshire and Coventry key offer is around access to talent, including skilled technical staff. The area has been a major centre for future transport technologies, from early rolling stock, to the modern bicycle, car and bus.

The surrounding city and county area is a major force in future rail technologies. Nuneaton is centrally located for the Midlands Rail Supply chain. More locally, Coventry & Warwickshire is home to WMG at the University of Warwick and its very light rail programme. This includes spin-outs Coventry VLR and the Revolution VLR, developed at the Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre. Nuneaton is home to Oleo International, a major developer of rail impact technology and digital simulation systems. Nuneaton is at the heart of both passenger and freight. The town is also a short distance from major rail delivery organisations. These include HS2 HQ, Network Rail Operating Centre (ROC), Network Rail Management Training Centre, West Midlands Trains, Rail Alliance, Rail Forum Midlands and Midlands Connect.

Levelling Up

2. Describe how your application will align with and demonstrate Levelling Up

What is your vision for levelling up your local area? What is currently underway to deliver this?

Nuneaton is the largest town in Warwickshire. The decline of coal and some manufacturing in the second half of the 20th century led to significant unemployment. Whilst Nuneaton has now largely recovered through the development of services and light engineering, significant areas of deprivation remain.

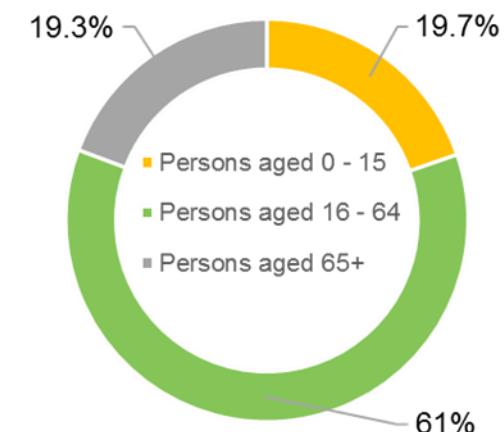
The socio-economic profile of the Borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth is less prosperous than the rest of Warwickshire. A key focus for the local councils is improving the social and economic prospects for the town particularly in the light of recent economic shocks and long term technology and geo-political change.

At £530.6 per week, average household income is lower than the average for Warwickshire (£597.8) and England (£589.8). The Index of Deprivation (2019) highlights that the town has a number of LSOAs listed as having a level of poverty within the top two deciles nationally.

UK government Covid 19 health measures led to the unemployment rate virtually doubling in the borough. By May 2021, unemployment in the Borough was the highest in Warwickshire (although broadly equivalent to the level for England as a whole.) Most of the unemployed are relatively young. The largest group are aged 16 to 24. Unemployment among the 50+ age group is low.

The Borough has a lower level of physical and mental wellbeing compared to county and national rates with this being particularly prevalent in deprived Wards. The Census of Population 2011 showed that around 6.2% of residents in Nuneaton and Bedworth considered their health to be “bad” or “very bad” compared to 4.9% in Warwickshire and 5.4% in England. Recently, COVID-19 deaths per 100,000 were higher in Nuneaton and Bedworth (250.8) compared to Warwickshire (218.6) and England (242.5).

Population by age



Impact of Covid-19 on unemployment

Nuneaton & Bedworth	3% Jan 20	6% May 21
Warwickshire	4% Jan 20	4% May 21
England	4% Jan 20	6% May 21

Levelling Up

2. Describe how your application will align with and demonstrate Levelling Up

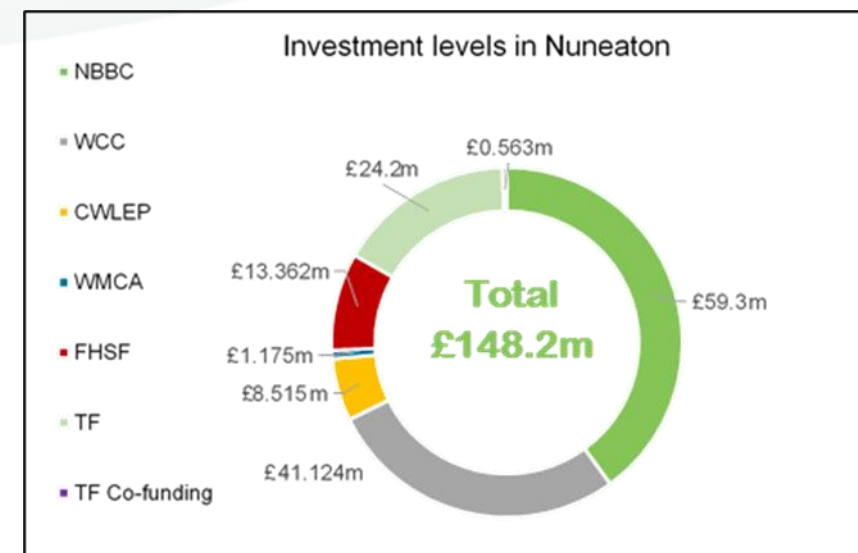
Towns Fund/ Future High Streets Fund

We have also successfully bid for more than £24 million funding from the [Towns Fund](#) (TF). The funding will support a number of projects that were selected in response to consultation feedback, and which form a package of interventions that directly address the challenges and opportunities within Nuneaton whilst achieving significant outputs and outcomes for the town.

[Future High Street Fund](#): Support from Ministry of Homes and Local Community will enable the Council to work with partners to transform locations as part of the Abbey Street Development, provide further security for town centre sites against the threat of flooding from the River Anker, and help delivery of the ambitious 'Bridge to Living' scheme in the town centre.

In their [2021 Vitality Index](#), Lambert Smith Hampton identified Nuneaton as topping the Opportunity Index as the location with the greatest opportunity to overcome current challenges and grow. The delivery of transport infrastructure and sustainable transport improvements; the remediation of land and removal of planning constraints, together with increased and improved training facilities and training offers; the provision of Full Fibre 5G technology, supported new incubation and grow on commercial spaces, combined with the improved leisure and heritage offer, will be the catalyst to achieve the required step-change for the town.

<https://mytownnuneaton.co.uk/nuneaton-town-investment-plan/>



Levelling Up

2. Describe how your application will align with and demonstrate Levelling Up

What levelling up opportunities do you believe could be created for your town/city that are linked to the headquarters?

Supporting high streets and town centres following the pandemic is an important component of the UK government 'levelling up' agenda. The UK government has presented its vision for town centres within the Build Back Better High Streets Strategy . This Strategy highlights the opportunity for a range of measures to revitalise high streets so they become “clean, green, mixed-use spaces in which people not only want to shop but also live, work, and relax”.

Business productivity (GVA per head of population) is low compared to both regional and national levels highlighting the Borough's predominantly low value economy. GVA generated per head of population in Nuneaton and Bedworth (£17,023) is also the lowest in the County (£34,302) and England (£30,239).

Poor skill levels hamper business investment and productivity. Children in the Borough achieve consistently below the county and UK average in national tests .. The Nuneaton Education Strategy highlights low pupil aspirations in some communities and some poor standard schools. 74% of schools in Nuneaton are rated by Ofsted as good or better (2019), as compared to 87% nationally and 89% across Warwickshire. Nuneaton and Bedworth has an identified need for boosting productivity, pay, jobs and living standards that a new HQ facility could contribute to addressing, particularly when associated services and jobs are factored in alongside increased footfall into the town centre.

Warwickshire Skills Hub, a major interface between business, training and education, is based in Nuneaton and run by Warwickshire County Council. The Hub is well placed to support the recruitment scale up for the new HQ, and support it to access local talent and provide opportunities for locals to access the opportunities provided by the new office development. The Skills Hub is already in dialogue with Network Rail about how we can support and add value across Warwickshire.

Basing the HQ in Nuneaton would be seen as a significant endorsement of the strategic location of the town and a genuine appreciation of a commitment to levelling up. Opportunities of this kind usually go to larger cities, however given the aspiration of the borough to work towards significant regeneration to transform Nuneaton, the timely addition of the HQ in Nuneaton, would support that agenda and be welcomed by all sectors.

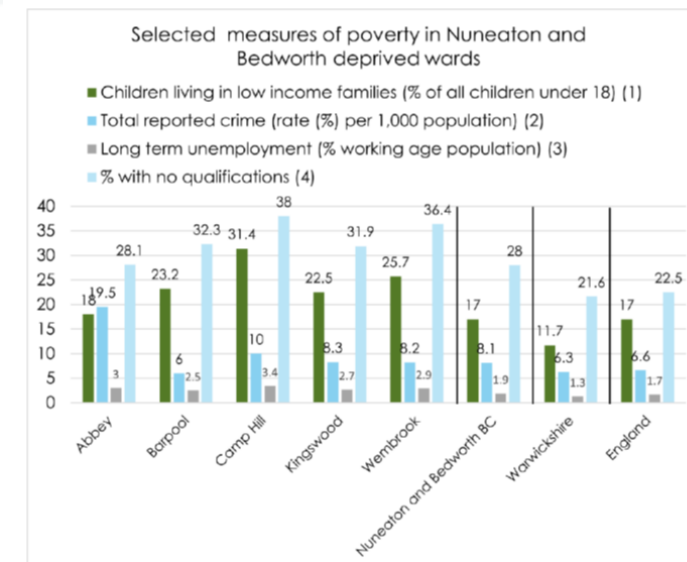


Figure 3: Selected measures of poverty in deprived wards

Sources: (1) HMRC 2016 (2) data.police.uk September 19–August 2020 (3) Long Term Unemployment - those who have been unemployed for 1 year or more (Census of Population 2011) (4) Census of Population 2011.

Connected and easy to get to

3. Describe how your location is well connected to the rest of Great Britain and how people will access your site

How would employees and visitors be able to access the National Headquarters, via rail routes and other sustainable modes?/ How will your suggested sites be equally accessible to all members of society, in line with Public Sector Equality Duties?

The County Council is committed to developing a sustainable and integrated transport system in which an expanded network of high-quality cycling infrastructure will play a key role in enabling and encouraging modal shift away from private cars for the benefit of the economy, environment and our residents' health.

Nuneaton train station in the town centre is one of the largest in the region outside of Birmingham New Street, with direct links to Birmingham, Coventry, Leamington Spa, Rugby, Tamworth and Leicester, and direct links further out to London, Stansted, Cambridge and directions north.

Staff would be able to commute sustainably by bus from within Nuneaton, which benefits from per capita one of the strongest bus offers in the local area.

Warwickshire County Council operates a Car Share scheme across county, so staff can plan sharing with colleagues.

The County Council has ambitious plans to extend the reach and quality of our cycling network so that cycling can be the go-to travel choice, particularly for short urban journeys. To achieve this, the Council is working hard on the delivery of a growing programme of investment in cycling infrastructure with the aim of creating a countywide network of cohesive, attractive and safe cycle routes. The current programme is delivering more than 8km of new high quality cycling infrastructure in Nuneaton and Bedworth with a value of approximately £6 million funded from a range of internal and external sources. This includes delivering new high quality cycle tracks on the following strategic routes:

- The A47 Long Shoot and Hinckley Road routes which will provide 3.1km of cycle routes and will connect the centre of Nuneaton to the A5 and Hinckley's cycling network
- A444 Weddington Road, connecting new housing growth to the north of Nuneaton to the railway station and town centre. -
- B4113 Nuneaton to Coventry corridor, providing new connections from the which will connect the south of Nuneaton to Bedworth and Bedworth to Coventry.
- The Bridge to Living project will link new town centre developments – notably new commercial/creative/retail units, live/workspace and residential mews in the town centre with the river and green space at George Eliot Gardens thus creating a green corridor running through the heart of the town to the proposed Transport Hub. It will also open up the town centre for greater leisure provision and create a new pedestrian route along the river Anker.
- Parks revival (Riversley Park) project aims to improve existing and create new pedestrian and cycle access both to Riversley Park and to Nuneaton town centre via the park from the outer edges of the town, including along the length of the River Anker

The County Council is currently preparing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in line with Department for Transport guidance. This will set out Warwickshire County Council's long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks. It identifies the locations in which infrastructure is required and prioritises where investment should be made. The Council is expecting to consult on the draft LCWIP later in 2022.

Connected and easy to get to

3. Describe how your location is well connected to the rest of Great Britain and how people will access your site

Demonstrate how your location has supported successful collaboration between local authorities, business and other organisations across the UK to further social, economic and transport objectives.

Transforming Nuneaton Programme

The [Transforming Nuneaton Programme](#) (TNP) established some six years ago, is an ambitious multi-agency plan aimed at transforming Nuneaton by 2030. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) are working with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) to deliver the TNP, by boosting economic growth via mixed use regeneration, including housing, leisure and commerce. The associated [Prospectus for Growth](#) details ambitions for the town and is the strategic blueprint to promote and capitalise upon opportunities. Partners including [Coventry and Warwickshire LEP](#) (CWLEP) and the [West Midlands Combined Authority](#) (WMCA) are supporting the plans, having already invested £9.69 million between them for early interventions and enabling works.

NUCKLE Rail Improvements

The Coventry to Nuneaton rail upgrade, (NUCKLE Phase 1), will improve the existing rail line between Coventry and Nuneaton and allow service frequency to double. It forms the first part of a vision for a direct rail link between Nuneaton and Leamington Spa. Two new stations have already been completed and platforms have been lengthened at Bedworth station to accommodate longer trains. A new bay platform will be built at Coventry station. NUCKLE is being delivered by the Council, Transport for West Midlands and Warwickshire County Council funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Coventry & Warwickshire Champions

Coventry and Warwickshire Champions unites businesses, organisations and individuals across the area in a powerful network to help develop and promote Coventry and Warwickshire and raise its profile. Champions are proactive advocates for the area who want to help influence how the area is perceived and portrayed, and make sure the area is talked about in the right places and by the right people.

<https://www.coventry-warwickshire.co.uk/>

Midlands Engine Rail Prospectus

Warwickshire County Council worked with Department for International Trade to develop the Opportunities in Rail Prospectus, that plotted the Midlands Rail Supply chain and local investment opportunities.

<https://brand.great.gov.uk/BMS/albums/?album=63773&lightboxAccessID=F08C012A-735F-4DD0-B0BAAF09BE64024B>

Opportunities for Great British Railways

4. Showcase the opportunities your location offers Great British Railways

How will your location enable Great British Railways to engage with customers, the private sector and wider transport industry?/ What opportunities does your location offer for working with the rail supply chain, manufacturing hubs and institutes?/ What opportunities exist for collaboration with the retail, economic and environmental sectors? How could Great British Railways benefit from these links?/ What opportunities does/do the site(s)/building(s) itself offer Great British Railways to develop as an organisation?

Rail Industry Links

Nuneaton is at the centre of a globally significant net zero carbon transport technology cluster, covering, auto, rail. Off-highway, aero and marine. This includes rail design, testing, development and manufacture. It also includes industry and trade groups, including specifically the rail bodies Rail Alliance and Midlands Rail Forum.

Warwickshire and Coventry are already home to significant Network Rail assets at Westwood Business Park (Management Training Centre) and Rugby Operating Centre (ROC).

This is the most active cluster of universities active in rail: University of Birmingham BCRRE is the UK's leading rail university, and the lead partner in UKRIN – UK Rail Innovation and Research Network, where it leads on digital technologies. The University of Warwick WMG has taken automotive technology adapted to rail, creating a new concept in mass transit called Very Light Rail. This promises to deliver a mass transit system, rail based but at a lower cost than heavy rail, and promising to provide a mass transit system to smaller cities like Coventry, and in doing so bringing the benefits of rail access to more deprived locations to support levelling up, and creating new opportunities for UK export.

Supporting the universities are a other testing, development and technology transfer organisations locally including the Manufacturing Technology Centre, Zenzic and the Advanced Propulsion Centre and MIRA Technology Park.

The county was the original home of industry organisation Rail Alliance. They are based now at University of Birmingham BCCRE (Birmingham Centre for Rail Research and Education), and the university carries out testing at Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre near Stratford.

Regionally, Nuneaton is located close to, and accessible directly by rail from HS2 Headquarters in Birmingham, and the new HS2 Hub at Birmingham International Airport. It is geographically close to Rail Forum Midlands (in Derby) and Network Rail test sites at Tuxford and Melton in Leicestershire. The location is also close to the Birmingham office of West Midlands Trains.

Warwickshire is home to the annual Rail Live show at Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre, and close to the NEC, home to the Railtex show.

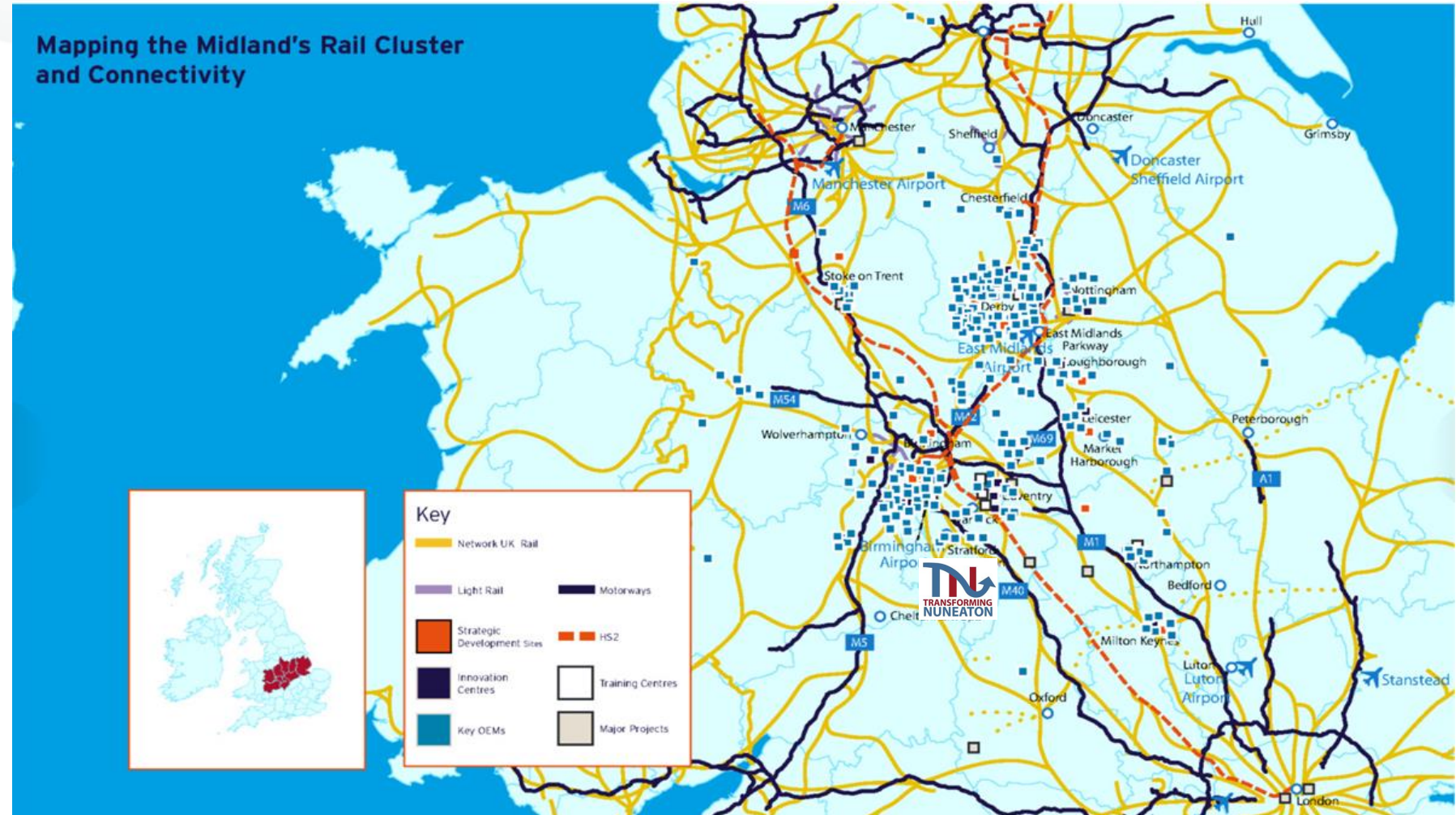
Together, this provides the opportunity for the UK rail industry to better connect geographically with the supply chain, and harness the benefits of new technologies being developed and tested by the Midlands rail supply chain.

Opportunities for Great British Railways

4. Showcase the opportunities your location offers Great British Railways

This is an opportunity for Great British Railways to relocate to a location further north, contribute to the regeneration and skills aspiration of a local area, and support it with levelling up, and it provides an opportunity to take a fresh approach to the UK railways: one that is accessing the latest technology, remains safe but moves to a lower development and construction cost base, and that challenges the entrenched interests that are holding back rail industry development.

Nuneaton, as part of the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP area, is a 'can do' location that will work hard to provide a supportive 'soft-landing package', through the combined efforts of local public and private partners.



Railway heritage & links to the network

5. Demonstrate the location's railway heritage and current network links

Demonstrate your railway heritage and the benefits it offers to Great British Railways.

Rail and Mass Transit Heritage

The Nuneaton town location places the new HQ in the centre of historical rail development technology.

To the East in Stourbridge, the Lion of 1828 was the first engine to run in mainland USA, and was a forerunner to Stephenson's Rocket. Later close by in Birmingham, Metro Cammell produced rail and underground carriages and buses until the early 1990s. To the East Brush traction continues to manufacture rail power technology.

To the north is the major rail centre of Derby and the Bombardier facility, the only UK facility with capability to design, test, develop and manufacture rolling stock in the UK.

The Nuneaton/ Bedworth and Coventry area was a pioneer in mass transit buses in the interwar and postwar years. The local Daimler company developed the first all metal buses to carry 60 passengers, and later the Fleetline became a mainstay of bus fleets between 1960 and 1983.

Bedworth, the other town in Nuneaton & Bedworth, is home to TA Savery and Oleo International, brands that can trace their histories back to 1698 and early pioneering hydraulics technologies. They are leaders in impact technology for the rail and lift industries and the Oleo tower is a famous local landmark in Bedworth.

Mainline Station

Nuneaton's rail heritage dates back to 1847 when the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) opened the Trent Valley Line, and a branch line to Coventry opened in 1850. The original station, like many others on the line had been designed by John William Livock: It was rebuilt on a larger scale with extra platforms in 1873. It was enlarged again in 1915 with its current buildings, which were designed by Reginald Wynn Owen. There were extensive goods yards and sidings forming one of the largest complexes on the rail networks until the 1960s. Nuneaton also boasted a large motive power depot which was allocated 60 steam locomotives alongside a coaling plant and turntable. The railways also served local mines, quarries and brickworks powering the industrial revolution and beyond.

In 2004 Network Rail built two new platforms numbered 6 and 7 on the eastern side of the station. These were built as part of a grade separation project to separate trains on the Birmingham to Peterborough line, from those on the West Coast Main Line.

In November 2012, the 0.9 mile Nuneaton North Chord opened to the north of the station. The chord allows freight trains approaching Nuneaton from Felixstowe via the Birmingham–Peterborough line, to join the northbound WCML after crossing the flyover, allowing them to avoid conflicts with southbound main line trains

In 2016 a new station in Nuneaton; Bermuda Park was opened on the line to Coventry.

Railway heritage & links to the network

5. Demonstrate the location's railway heritage and current network links

Transport Technology Today

WMG at the university of Warwick and Transport Design International have developed VLR or Very Light Rail Technology, for a lower cost mass transit tracked rail solution.

Vivarail produced hybrid and fully electric trains produced and engineered in Warwickshire.

Porterbrook and University of Birmingham BCRRE have developed and tested the Hydroflex, a hydrogen powered train, tested and developed at the Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre.

What links are there with existing rail employment, innovation and sector bodies, such as regional or local offices?/ How could you use the headquarters to preserve and enhance your railway heritage?

Warwickshire and Coventry is a major centre for new rail technology and propulsion systems. Our area has excellent links to industry through Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, Coventry & Warwickshire LEP Growth Hub. We also have excellent links to business through our access to finance and business support programmes, funded and delivered in partnership

The £22m ROC, operating 24 hours a day, is one of 12 nationally which will eventually control the entire rail network in Britain and replace more than 800 signal boxes and other operational locations. It is a key part of the future of Britain's railway in Warwickshire and beyond.

Hercules Construction have chosen Nuneaton to establish a National Training Academy for all major construction and civil projects, including HS2. They have acquired a large site and will be working with the local college to onboard apprentices on site.

The Network Rail Training Centre a short distance away in Coventry is a leadership academy offers a variety of backdrops on a single site. With landscaped grounds and fountains, other features include training suites, conference rooms and an auditorium.

Rail Alliance was originally formed in Warwickshire as a national B2B organisation across the UK. It has recently merged with Rail Business Daily.

Rail Forum Midlands, established in 1993, is a national industry body with strong regional connections. Based at the heart of one of the largest clusters of rail companies in the world our members span the whole industry from global corporations to micro SMEs, asset owners to manufacturers, digital solutions providers to passenger and freight operators.

Porterbrook added the Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre to its portfolio of managed railway assets in 2021. The Long Marston Rail Innovation Centre is a 135 acre rail connected site in Warwickshire, it offers a 2 mile circular test track and 12 miles of secure sidings. Porterbrook's plans for the site will see a significant investment and upgrade in these facilities.

Proximity of the new HQ to the cradle of UK rail technology and development will help ensure the Midlands continues to shape and deliver global mass transit technologies.

Value for Money

6. Describe how your location will offer Great British Railways good value for money

How will your location offer financial efficiency to Great British Railways?/

How does the proposed site allow Great British Railways to make good use of public money and keep costs down?

While our central location and access to talent makes travel and recruitment/retention, lower land values make for lower office rental costs typically 60% of the cost of London and the south east.

Land Value estimates		Industrial	Residential
West Midlands	Nuneaton & Bedworth	£720,000	£1,370,000
South East	Milton Keynes	£1,050,000	£3,050,000
West Midlands	Coventry	£825,000	£1,810,000

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/land-value-estimates-for-policy-appraisal-2019>

The other benefit of lower land prices mean that staff relocating and newly recruited will benefit from more affordable housing than would be the experience further to the south.

How does your location generate public value including economic, social and environmental impacts?

The proposed location in Nuneaton would help drive and support our wider masterplan for regeneration around Nuneaton Rail Station and our ongoing work to develop this into a modern integrated transport hub which is much more strongly connected to the town and allows for multi-modal transport links.

This is a vital component of our Transforming Nuneaton Programme, with the Transport Hub and surrounding area providing the gateway into the town centre. The current stock of buildings and uses are low value and of poor quality.

Our ambition is to transform the surrounding area, creating new employment opportunities within new, high quality buildings; significant improve the public realm; and create enhanced connectivity to the station and wider development area, particularly for active travel and public transport. The location will therefore help generate significant economic and environmental impact for the town, and will support the wider transformation of the town and the multiple associated social impacts that this will bring.

Public Support

7. Demonstrate how the national headquarters will be welcomed by the local public

Demonstrate the importance of the railways to the local community and your region.

Local residents are understandably concerned over the future prosperity of their town centre, and have highlighted the lack of high quality employment opportunities within the town as a key concern [have they]. Through our Nuneaton Education Strategy, we know that aspirations of young people in the area are lower than in the rest of the county, largely due to the lack of perceived opportunities. The National Headquarters would provide a significant investment and boost to the town, demonstrating the huge potential that the town has, and would be warmly welcomed by the local public.

Shackertstone

The Battlefield Line is the last remaining part of the former Ashby and Nuneaton Joint Railway which was opened in 1873. It runs from Shackerstone via Market Bosworth to Shenton in Leicestershire and is operated by the Shackerstone Railway Society.

<https://www.battlefieldline.co.uk/>

Statfold Narrow Gauge Museum Trust Ltd

Set within 1,000 acres of stunning Staffordshire countryside, Statfold is just a stones-throw from the large market town of Tamworth, making the venue ideally placed in the heart of England for visitors. An idyllic narrow-gauge steam railway and museum provide the backdrop for weddings, parties, conferences and special events. Not forgetting the rail enthusiasts for whom we continue our restoration work, open our sheds for and share the love of narrow-gauge stock.

<https://www.statfold.com/>

Oxford Economics working with Rail Industry Association (RIA) looked at the economic impacts of the rail industry in the UK. Here the figures show the significant contribution the rail industry makes to the Nuneaton and Coventry & Warwickshire area.

Fig. 85. Employment by Local Enterprise Partnership

Thousands of jobs, 2016 average	Railway system	Rail supply sector	Retailers, caterers & supply chain	Total rail-related industries	Induced impacts	Total of all impacts	Total local impact as % total local GVA
Black Country	2.92	5.28	0.78	8.99	2.77	11.76	2.32%
Buckinghamshire Thames Valley	0.36	1.74	0.18	2.27	1.55	3.82	1.36%
Cheshire and Warrington	1.86	4.81	0.61	7.27	3.24	10.51	1.94%
Coast to Capital	4.76	6.99	1.32	13.07	5.41	18.48	1.84%
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	0.62	1.30	0.14	2.07	1.60	3.67	1.53%
Coventry and Warwickshire	0.95	3.94	0.37	5.26	2.77	8.03	1.58%
Cumbria	0.97	1.73	0.33	3.03	1.65	4.68	1.79%
Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	2.43	9.02	0.67	12.12	5.86	17.97	1.69%
Dorset	0.73	2.10	0.19	3.02	2.17	5.19	1.41%
Enterprise M3	1.20	5.85	0.56	7.61	4.91	12.52	1.42%
Gloucestershire	0.47	1.90	0.17	2.53	1.83	4.37	1.36%
Greater Birmingham and Solihull	4.11	7.75	1.23	13.09	5.69	18.78	1.79%

Fig. 83. GVA by Local Enterprise Partnership

£ billion in 2016	Railway system	Rail supply sector	Retailers, caterers & supply chain	Total rail-related industries	Induced impacts	Total of all impacts	Total local impact as % total local GVA
Black Country	0.24	0.22	0.02	0.48	0.11	0.59	2.79%
Buckinghamshire Thames Valley	0.04	0.11	0.01	0.15	0.08	0.23	1.43%
Cheshire and Warrington	0.15	0.29	0.02	0.47	0.13	0.60	2.06%
Coast to Capital	0.47	0.39	0.05	0.90	0.26	1.16	2.23%
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	0.05	0.07	0.01	0.12	0.06	0.18	1.74%
Coventry and Warwickshire	0.08	0.23	0.01	0.32	0.11	0.42	1.77%

Public Support

7. Demonstrate how the national headquarters will be welcomed by the local public

How do your intentions for the national headquarters tie in with the needs of your local communities, your identity and values?

The Town Centre Strategy for Nuneaton provides a road map for the improvement and regeneration of the town centre to make it into an attractive place to live, work and visit. Town centres provide a focal point for local communities, economic activity and job creation. They provide transport hubs, spaces for leisure and increasingly they are places to live. As the largest town in Warwickshire, Nuneaton has a distinctive role in providing a focus for business and leisure activity for residents and visitors. The new national HQ will be a key enabler for the transformation of our town..

The Local Enterprise Partnership in its original Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) identified advanced manufacturing and Engineering as a key sector for the region. Later work with Department for International Trade 'Midlands opportunities in Rail' demonstrated the significant contribution made by the Coventry & Warwickshire rail cluster to the Midlands supply chain.

The location of another major HQ operation will contribute significantly to the vitality and footfall of the town centre, supporting the aims of Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough council to create a vibrant place to 'Live Work and Visit'.

The LEP reset framework, and the work of the WMCA around key sectors, identifies the future mobility sector, incorporating the rail sector, and future propulsion technologies, to be an important opportunity sector for the Coventry & Warwickshire area.

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