

National Centre for Construction and Development Excellence:

Current activity and ambitions for the Springfield site

Background

Springfield Campus in the City of Wolverhampton is a strategic investment opportunity on a nationally significant development at the heart of the West Midlands.

Utilising nearly £12m of funding from the Black Country Consortium, plans are already underway to transform the 12-acre site of the former Springfield brewery into Europe's largest specialist construction and built environment campus, bringing together businesses and the education sector to maximise the impact on the economy. The £100+ million development is acting as the catalyst for economic and social regeneration, tailored to creating jobs, facilitating innovation and delivering the technical and professional experts required in the UK.

Phase 1 of the Springfield Campus development has seen the successful opening of the [West Midlands Construction University Technical College](#), closely followed by the [Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills hub](#).

Work has also started on the University of Wolverhampton's School of Architecture and the Built Environment on the site. The plans for the School of Architecture form the largest part of the first phase of the site to create the Springfield Campus. The 85,000 sq ft build will be delivered in the 2019-20 academic year and will become home to 1,100 existing students and 65 staff, with the number of students projected to grow over time to more than 1,500.

Phase 2 of the site is ready for investment with services and infrastructure in place and a number of plots available.

In May 2018, the West Midlands Mayor announced his intention to support the development of a National Brownfield Institute (NBI) on the Springfield Campus, as part of the region's Housing Deal from Government. The National Brownfield Institute (NBI) would be a national centre of excellence for brownfield regeneration, helping to ensure sustainable development for the long-term benefit of the community.

The NBI will be composed of three distinct functional elements:

- 1) Policy & Strategy
 - a. Influence government policy and decision making for brownfield matters
 - b. Develop and inform policies related to brownfield regeneration
- 2) Research & Development
 - a. Undertake integrated applied research into improved technologies and methodologies
 - b. Identify process improvements for brownfield regeneration
- 3) Commercial Services
 - a. Enhanced analysis and use of the National Brownfield Land Register
 - b. Brownfield Data Labs offering commercial review and scenario testing for brownfield development projects
 - c. Continuing Professional Development related to brownfield regeneration

The Springfield Campus forms part of a £3.7 Billion investment programme which is transforming the City of Wolverhampton, making it one of the best locations in the country to live, learn, work and invest. Other notable developments near Springfield include:

- [Canalside Quarter](#) which will provide desirable city centre living and a destination for visitors with shops, walkways, cycle paths and leisure facilities.
- [The Brewers Yard](#) which is a joint venture between developer Court Collaboration, City of Wolverhampton Council and West Midlands Combined Authority to deliver a mixture of 1,100 city houses and apartments, and 60,000 sq. ft of new retail and commercial space, designed by Glancy Nicholls Architects.

Opportunity

The vision for Springfield is to create a super campus where the education elements in Phase 1 sit alongside sector leading innovation, research and training generated from private sector occupiers in Phase 2 ultimately creating a National Centre for Construction and Development Excellence.

The NCCD is envisaged as a hybrid think/do tank bringing together Phase 1 & 2 however this does not necessarily mean a new building or new infrastructure.

This will enable the region to have a leading international presence in construction and built environment innovation, expertise and delivery. It will give employers the opportunity to help to develop and expand their operations, giving young people unique opportunities for a bright future; and providing researchers the opportunity to work in pioneering environment and facilitate inventive and ground breaking ideas. The like of which does not exist for the construction and built environment anywhere else in the UK.

The NCCD would vary from the NBI as it would be primarily focused on developing construction and development skills, technologies and methodologies through innovation and partnership with private sector organisations. The NCCD would complement the NBI but would encompass the wider construction industry with a focus beyond brownfield development. It has the potential to provide co-location with partners from the construction industry ultimately cementing the relationship between business and education.

The NCCD would adopt similar principles to the [National Automotive Innovation Centre](#) which is a joint venture between WMG at the University of Warwick, Jaguar Land Rover, and Tata Motors UK.

In the national context, there is a housing crisis in the UK, with Housing charity Shelter estimating that 1.2 million new homes are needed for younger families who cannot afford to buy. The Government has committed to building 250,000 homes nationally by 2022 while the West Midlands Combined Authority is implementing an ambitious programme to deliver 215,000 new homes by 2031. However, these commitments are at significant risk from the constrained productivity and innovation growth in the construction sector. Based on current entrant levels, Homes England has estimated that the construction sector could see a 20-25% decline in the workforce by 2026.

Establishing an NCCD at the Springfield Campus is therefore of a significant importance as it will provide a catalyst for economic and social regeneration in the West Midlands; becoming the dynamic heart of the Midlands engine to drive construction and built environment expertise nationally and internationally.

Realising the Opportunity

The West Midlands Growth Company, on behalf of the West Midlands Combined Authority and in conjunction with City of Wolverhampton Council and University of Wolverhampton, is developing a detailed plan of action to turn into reality the ambition to create an internationally significant National Centre for Construction and Development Excellence (NCCD) at the Springfield Campus.

To support this ambition, we are seeking to commission two phases of work.

Phase One will review existing and planned development activity on the Springfield site to identify the additional work required to enable the Springfield site to truly become a National Centre for Construction and Development Excellence. It will then turn this into a strategic business case and action plan.

Phase Two will depend on the outputs from Phase One but, at the current time, it is expected that the outputs from this project will be used to inform the development of a full Green Book compliant business case to be used as bidding document to secure resources from Government and the private sector.