



ARDEN CROSS - Q&A

March 2016

KEY FACTS AND OVERVIEW

- The **UK's best connected** strategic development site
- Accessible via **road, rail and air** links
- **350 acre (140 hectare)** development location at the very centre of the UK
- Masterplanned for the delivery of a **large-scale, sustainable mixed use development**
- Adjacent to **Birmingham Airport and existing Birmingham International Railway Station**
- Being delivered by the **Arden Cross Consortium** of land owners
- First element of the far-reaching **UK Central** masterplan
- Future home of the **HS2 Interchange site** (estimated 21,000 passengers/day in 2026)

DETAILED RESPONSES

1. What is Arden Cross?

Arden Cross is the UK's best connected strategic development site. Extending to 350 acres (140 hectares), Arden Cross has been identified as the delivery site for the HS2 Interchange Station. An important element of the HS2 development, the Interchange Station will be connected to the existing transport hubs of Birmingham Airport and Birmingham International Railway Station.

Arden Cross is a key part of UK Central, a vision for the economic prosperity of the region which is supported by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), the West Midlands Combined Authority and UK Central Government.

2. Where is Arden Cross?

Arden cross is situated in the geographic centre of the UK between the major conurbations of Birmingham (eight miles away) and Coventry (11 miles away).

London (114 miles away) and Manchester (96 miles away) are easily reached from the site thanks to its location at the heart of the UK's national road and rail networks.

3. Who is the Arden Cross Consortium?

The Arden Cross site is owned by a consortium of four major landowners who have pooled their resources to enable the delivery of this truly world class development: Birmingham City Council, Packington Estate, Coleshill Estate, and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

The formation of the Consortium has enabled the creation of a seamlessly integrated development framework for the site as a whole. Working towards its core objectives, the Consortium will seek suitable investment and/or development partners for the site.

4. Why should I consider investing here?

Widely recognised as the most connected strategic development location in the UK and situated at the heart of an extensive national and international transport network, Arden Cross is being masterplanned for the delivery of a long-term, sustainable mixed-use community of residential, commercial, retail and leisure uses.

A host of regional and national assets are on the site's doorstep, including the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham Airport and existing Birmingham International Railway Station on the adjacent site on the other side of the M42.

The West Midlands is the UK's manufacturing heartland, with a rich heritage in the sector and leading international manufacturers such as Jaguar Land Rover, Rolls-Royce Aerospace, GKN and JCB are operating from bases in the region.

This is in no small way supported by the region's extensive transport connections, with the 'Golden Triangle', an extensive and fertile logistics heartland framed by the M1, M6 and M42 motorways, located just to the north of Arden Cross.

Birmingham, the UK's second largest city and a burgeoning location for a range of sectors – from professional services to technology start-ups - is one of the UK's greenest cities, was the highest ranking UK regional city in the Mercer Quality of Life Index for the second consecutive year in 2015 and was named one of the 'top 10 cities for 2015' by Rough Guides.

UK Central Solihull has one of the strongest economies outside London contributing £5.1bn to UK GDP. UK Central is seen as a 'Growth Leader' in terms of capital value growth and forecasted economic success (JLL: Where next in the UK? 2015).

The region is also steeped in history, with the town of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon, birthplace of William Shakespeare, less than 30 miles away. The affluent towns of Solihull to the west and Royal Leamington Spa to the south east also provide a range of high quality retail and leisure amenities.

Central London is just over one hour away by train, which will reduce to 38 minutes with the arrival of the first phase of HS2 in 2026, with Manchester an hour and a half by train.

5. Is the site really that well connected?

Existing transport links to the site offer an outstanding level of connectivity to the UK's road and rail networks via Junction 6 of the M42, and Birmingham International Railway Station which is a key station on the West Coast Main Line and provides connections to key UK cities including London, Glasgow and Manchester.

Journey times from the existing Birmingham International railway station to Birmingham's city centre New Street station – the busiest commuter rail hub outside of London – are currently circa 10 minutes.

Birmingham Airport continues to enjoy year on year growth in passenger numbers and having recently received an extension to its runway, is able to operate direct flights to over 140 locations including the west coast of the United States and China.

The anticipated delivery of the HS2 Interchange Station will further enhance the region's connectivity, with the first phase of the High Speed Rail project reducing travel times from Birmingham to London to 38 minutes while enhancing capacity.

A dedicated rapid transit 'people mover' will be delivered to connect the HS2 Interchange Station directly to the existing Airport, railway station and National Exhibition Centre.

As a part of the connected transport vision for the area, a new Sprint rapid transit bus system is being planned which will connect with Coventry.

Plans are also in place for the future extension of the Midland Metro tram service which will run from Birmingham to Coventry, alongside the announcement in the Government's Road Investment Strategy to carry out major improvements to Junction 6 of the M42 to improve traffic flow across the region.

6. What is the Arden Cross position in relation to the Airport's expansion plans?

Arden Cross recognises the importance of Birmingham Airport to the region and the contribution that it makes to the West Midlands economy and as a driver for GVA to the region. It is in the region's interests that Birmingham Airport continues to thrive.

Arden Cross is promoting the opportunity of growth around the HS2 Interchange Station in accordance with aspirations of central, regional and local Government and as set out in the HS2 Growth Strategy and supported by UK Central.

Birmingham Airport has expressed aspirations to have a presence at the HS2 Interchange site and the Arden Cross Consortium welcome further engagement with the Airport and other stakeholders to consider the opportunities and challenges that this may present in optimising the opportunity created by the arrival of HS2.

7. What if HS2 doesn't happen – will this kill the development?

Without doubt the arrival of HS2 will act as a catalyst in delivering this site for development. However, historically the site had been considered for other developments and uses including an out-of-town shopping centre and a National Sports Stadium.

It is important to emphasise that Arden Cross is about more than the development of the Interchange Station and it is the shared vision of the stakeholders that the site is recognised as a viable location that can assist in alleviating the current pressures on high quality housing and commercial requirement in the region and delivering economic growth and a real sense of place.

8. What is UK Central? How does Arden Cross fit into this?

UK Central is an economic strategic vision which is being driven by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and is fully supported by the wider Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), West Midlands Combined Authority and UK Central Government.

An international gateway and one of the country's strongest performing economies, UK Central offers outstanding inward investment potential, an enviable lifestyle and Arden Cross, a bold vision for a destination with high speed rail at its heart.

UK Central is four interconnected inward investment zones encompassing a wide range of urban and rural business locations with a mix of ready-to-occupy offices and land ripe for development.

The UKC framework provides a key link in ensuring the development aspirations for Arden Cross are consistent with those of both local and central government, along with local stakeholders, businesses and communities.

UK Central has over 300 individual stakeholders, including:

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership	NEC	Homes and Communities Agency
Birmingham, Coventry and Warwickshire Councils	Genting UK	North Solihull Partnership
High Speed 2	Birmingham Airport	Centro
Arden Cross	Solihull College	Midlands Connect
Jaguar Land Rover	Highways England	West Midlands ITA
	Government	

9. How does the Interchange Station (at Arden Cross) differ from Curzon?

The Interchange Station at Arden Cross is at the centre of the proposed national High Speed Rail network and represents a key conduit and multimodal transport hub as well as the first station outside of London.

Trains from destinations including London, Manchester, Leeds, Derby and Sheffield will all pass through the Interchange Station, with those bound for Curzon Street diverted off the main railway line to a connecting line that will then access the city centre.

It is anticipated that over 40% of all users of HS2 will disembark at the Interchange Station, representing some 21,000 passengers a day in 2026, rising to 38,000 by 2041 when the second phase, extending to the north east and north west, becomes live.

10. Is the site part of the greenbelt? Will this cause an issue with delivery?

The site is currently identified as part of the West Midlands Green Belt. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council is reviewing Green Belt boundaries as part of the Local Plan Review and a number of options are proposed to amend Green Belt boundaries to allocate land for development.

Solihull has ambitious plans for growth and it is recognised that land must be removed from the Green Belt to accommodate development needs. Arden Cross is included as one of the options where the Green Belt boundary is being considered for amendment. This option proposes to exclude the land from Green Belt and allocate the land for mixed use development.

The Local Plan review is subject to consultation and the Arden Cross team has responded to support the option that removes the interchange site from the Green Belt and allocates it for development. The case for this is based on demonstrating exceptional circumstances. The case for the site's development is considered to be exceptional because of the scale and nature of the opportunity provided by the HS2 station and the associated development that could be created.

The Local Plan is due for adoption by the end of 2017 and is a necessary prerequisite to the submission of planning applications on which development will be based.

This will unlock the wider potential of Arden Cross as a mixed-use development site.

11. What is the Urban Growth Company?

With the establishment of an Urban Growth Company, overseeing an expected £1bn of infrastructure investment into the area known as the 'Hub', formed as part of the HS2 Interchange station to be delivered at Arden Cross, Solihull Council has shown its intent to be a key driver of the regional economy and at the forefront of UK PLC's growth agenda.

The Urban Growth Company will lead and deliver major infrastructure investment in the area that already boasts the global economic assets of Birmingham Airport, the National Exhibition Centre and Jaguar Land Rover. Through the integration of the High Speed Rail Interchange within Arden Cross, a truly international transport hub will result, creating a world class development opportunity.

The co-ordination of plans to bring forward sites for high quality commercial space, housing and investments in infrastructure through the Company, will ensure UK Central's ambitions for the area are realised.

To oversee delivery, the Company has appointed senior industry leaders, including Nick Brown as Chair, alongside Huw Rhys Lewis as Managing Director, both with an outstanding reputation and track record in the industry for delivering complex projects and large scale, world class development.

Nick brings a wealth of experience, spanning 35 years, in the transport, infrastructure and professional services sectors and his most recent role was as Managing Director of London Underground and London Rail for Transport for London.

Huw Lewis has over 25 years' experience in the private and public sector - in the UK and internationally - covering a range of sectors including retail, offices, leisure, transportation, waste education, housing and infrastructure. Previous roles include Director of Property Projects at the City of London Corporation and Director at Balfour Beatty, overseeing major capital projects at Heathrow T5 and T2.