

Self-driving shuttle arrives at Birmingham Business Park

2 years ago



Solihull Council's state-of-the-art self-driving shuttle has been put to work ferrying passengers around Workman-managed Birmingham Business Park in the latest round of on-road trials.

This most recent deployment forms part of a wider Council-led project which aims to test out how Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) might be safely and seamlessly integrated into the borough's transport network in the future.

Solihull is already playing a leading role in the development and deployment of CAV technology. In 2021, Solihull Council became the first local authority in the country to purchase its own electric and fully autonomous shuttle, using a grant from the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP). Since then, successful passenger trials have been carried out at both Birmingham Airport and the NEC, where the shuttle was also used in the Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay. Building on the success of these deployments, this latest trial will see the shuttle take to Solihull's roads once again, this time transporting passengers along a pre-mapped loop of [Birmingham Business Park](#) while again interacting with other road users.

Designed and manufactured by Coventry's Aurrigo, the futuristic looking Auto-Shuttle can carry up to ten passengers and uses a suite of sensors, including LiDAR, to understand its surroundings and move around safely. For the purposes of testing, the shuttle will be limited to a top speed of 20mph. In line with current legislation, a safety operator will be on-board at all times, and will be able to take control of the shuttle at any point if required.

As well as business park employees, the passenger trials will also be open to members of the public who

want to experience one of the first fully self-driving shuttles in the UK. The CAV will be running at [Birmingham Business Park](https://www.birminghambusinesspark.co.uk/) until the end of March. Visitors to the business park can book their ride at: www.solihull.gov.uk/cavtrials

These trials are providing Solihull Council and its partners with real-world test cases and data which is being used to better understand how this technology might be used in the future. Last month larger scale plans for a [Multi-Area Connected Automated Mobility \(MACAM\) project](#) were announced. Overseen by a regional consortium led by leading autonomous technology provider Conigital, part of this exciting development project will seek to establish a new permanent commercial route between Birmingham International rail station and Birmingham Business Park through the NEC using a new fleet of new self-driving vehicles. The current trials at Birmingham Business Park will be used as an important pathfinder project ahead of this more ambitious project.

Councillor Ian Courts, Leader of Solihull Council, said: “CAV technology has the potential to revolutionise the way we get around our towns, cities and rural areas and, Solihull is playing an increasingly important role in this emerging sector. We’ve already carried out a series of successful pathfinder trials here in Solihull which are showing how it is possible, taking a safety-first approach, to practically and start incorporating autonomous vehicles into our future transport infrastructure.

“The results of this trial will provide further knowledge and experience of self-driving vehicles in a real-world environment, helping to inform our future mobility services and highway infrastructure design across Solihull and the wider region. Alongside the exciting opportunities CAV technology represents in terms of improving future transport and connectivity, this emerging industry also offers our well-established local research and advanced manufacturing sector huge potential for further economic growth in our borough and across the West Midlands.”

Lori Henebury, Workman’s Marketing, Community & Business Development Manager at Birmingham Business Park said: “Birmingham Business Park already lies at the heart of one of the best-connected destinations in the UK and Europe. Operating in a busy, but controlled environment, we hope these latest trials will help to provide even more real-world operating experience which can be used to further improve efficiency and safety for passengers. We are really excited to be working with Solihull Council on this, and to gain valuable insight into ways we may be able to further improve our site access and transport links, while also working towards our net zero carbon ambitions.”

Further information is available at www.solihull.gov.uk/CAVTrials