

Recent Achievements and Current Activities: Inward Investment

Inward Investment Achievements Across Leicestershire

The Place Marketing Team, account managed projects:

Company: Navigator Tissue UK

Navigator Tissue UK is a leading manufacturer and supplier of private-label and branded tissue products, including toilet roll, kitchen towels, and wet wipes, for major UK retailers. Following its acquisition in 2024 by the Portuguese pulp and paper giant, The Navigator Company, the business required larger UK premises to facilitate growth and consolidate its manufacturing operations.

To meet these needs, Navigator Tissue secured a lease for a 277,475 sq ft unit at Optimus Point, Glenfield. This new facility enables the business to consolidate production from Thurmaston and north-west England. 50 new jobs will be created, predominately within manufacturing, engineering, and maintenance, while 100 existing jobs will be safeguarded from the Thurmaston site.

The PMT played a central role in retaining Navigator Tissue within Leicestershire and facilitating their expansion. Support included:

- Undertaking comprehensive site searches and providing property and labour market data to inform decision-making.
- Liaising with Blaby District Council's planning team regarding change-of-use requirements for manufacturing and guiding the business through the process to increase the unit's power capacity.
- Facilitating introductions to Blaby District Council's work and skills team, the Leicester Employment Hub and a peer employer for best-practice advice on volume recruitment. Consequently, Navigator Tissue will attend local job fairs and utilise partner channels to advertise vacancies throughout 2026.
- Supporting employee integration by connecting Navigator Tissue with Leicestershire Adult Learning Services for ESOL support and providing lifestyle information to encourage staff relocation.
- Coordinating a PR event to celebrate the opening of the new unit, promoting the investment in Leicestershire and showcasing the employment opportunities.

Company: YunExpress UK Ltd

YunExpress UK is a logistics firm that manages international shipping for e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, eBay, and AliExpress. The business handles international transport and UK customs clearance before transferring packages to local couriers, like Royal Mail, for final delivery.

To meet growing e-commerce demand, YunExpress UK required a second UK site near a major transport hub. They subsequently established operations at East Midlands Airport (EMA) in a 60,000 sq ft unit, creating 30 new jobs.

The PMT supported YunExpress UK by:

- Conducting comprehensive site searches and providing property data to identify suitable locations.
- Guiding the company through the application process for a business rates re-evaluation for their new premises.
- Introducing YunExpress UK to the East Midlands Freeport, aligning with the business's long-term UK expansion plans. As a result, they have formally registered interest in the emerging EMA southern site.

Company: Smith Brothers Stores Ltd

Smith Brothers Stores (SBS) is one of the UK's largest independent merchants specialising in the distribution of commercial heating, piping, and air conditioning equipment. Established in 1897, the Leicestershire-based, family-owned company operates a vast network of branches and remains committed to retaining its headquarters and distribution facilities within the county.

To support its expansion, SBS recently opened a new 75,000 sq ft distribution centre in Glenfield. This facility enhances UK-wide logistics, significantly increases stockholding capacity, and supports continued growth. The project has created 10 new jobs while safeguarding 150 existing roles.

The PMT supported SBS by:

- Conducting property searches, coordinating visits, and providing detailed commercial property insights.
- Recognising SBS's historic roots and status as a major local employer, the PMT coordinated meetings with Blaby District Council's senior leadership team to discuss specific business challenges.
- Utilising this initial collaboration to help SBS secure short-term accommodation within Council-owned units to meet immediate needs. To facilitate the transition to their permanent site, the PMT also coordinated discussions between SBS, their commercial agents, and the Council to identify a new tenant for the vacated space.
- Introducing SBS to Blaby District Council's Work and Skills team and the Leicester Employment Hub to explore recruitment and apprenticeship programs to support future growth.

Company: Geary's Bakeries

Geary's Bakeries is a premier Leicestershire-based craft bakery that successfully bridges the gap between traditional artisanal methods and high-volume production. As the innovators behind the "Jason's Sourdough" brand and a primary supplier of award-winning bread to major UK supermarkets, the company recently underwent a massive expansion.

Supported by a £36 million investment, Geary's established a 95,000 sq ft state-of-the-art manufacturing facility at Optimus Point in Glenfield, creating 280 local jobs.

The PMT and Blaby District Council, working in partnership, provided support through:

- Collaborating with the agents and developers of Optimus Point to maximise the promotion of the site.
- Securing public funding to acquire new equipment.
- Partnering with the Leicester Employment Hub and Jobcentre Plus to drive recruitment and explore apprenticeship opportunities. Geary's attended local job fairs and filled 8 roles as a result.

Looking ahead to financial year 2026/27, Geary's remains committed to workforce development, with plans to explore new apprenticeship and skills development initiatives with local partners.

Company: Bom Bom Patisserie

Bom Bom Patisserie is an independent, family-run bakery and specialty coffee shop. They are best known for their award-winning cookies, artisanal bakes, and high-quality coffee served across several community-focused locations in Leicestershire.

Bom Bom approached the PMT for support in acquiring a larger production kitchen facility to enable business growth. The business successfully acquired a lease for a 2,500 sq ft unit at Falcon Works in Loughborough, creating 1 new job and safeguarding 4.

The PMT supported the expansion by:

- Undertaking property searches, coordinating visits and providing detailed commercial property information.
- Introducing the business to local commercial agents to assist in finding a suitable unit.
- Providing guidance on financial and recruitment schemes.
- Connecting them with the Business Gateway Growth Hub to ensure Bom Bom has a long-term partner for accessing funding and growth advice.

Active Inward Investment Enquiries

The following are examples of projects the PMT is actively supporting:

Former Holwell Foundry Works in Melton District

A £100m advanced manufacturing facility is being developed by Saint-Gobain on the site of the former Holwell Foundry Works in Melton district, creating 250 high-quality jobs in sustainable construction manufacturing and bringing a large brownfield site back into use for modern manufacturing.

When Saint-Gobain was considering multiple locations, the PMT, in partnership with Melton Borough Council, engaged their senior leadership team to outline available support. This intervention was a key factor in securing Saint-Gobain's investment.

Since then, the PMT has provided platforms for Saint-Gobain to promote the project to the property and construction industry via UKREiiF and investment roundtables.

These efforts have encouraged local supply chain opportunities and showcased Leicestershire's collaborative environment to attract further investment. Additionally, the PMT is supporting Saint-Gobain's engagement with partners to deliver local employment opportunities as the project progresses.

Loughborough University Science & Enterprise Park in Charnwood District

The PMT has partnered with Loughborough University to provide place marketing and investment support to promote the Loughborough University Science & Enterprise Park. Key initiatives include creating new promotional materials, scheduled for launch in late 2026, and bespoke documentation for UKREiiF to unlock development land and drive interest from investors and occupiers.

By utilising relationships, including with the Department for Business and Trade, the Office for Investment and East Midlands Chamber, the PMT has secured high-quality lead referrals. Notably, a £30m vertical farming HQ, an advanced composite materials manufacturing facility and an anchor tenant for an amenity hub. These projects are projected to deliver over 50 high-value jobs and knowledge exchange projects.

Former Pera Innovation and R&D Workshop in Melton District

Facilitated by the PMT, Pera and Leicester developer Obstrat are converting a former R&D workshop into a health and wellbeing facility. This re-purposing project will feature padel courts, yoga studios, co-working spaces, and a café, significantly boosting Pera Business Park's regional competitiveness and resilience as an employment destination.

The PMT coordinated early engagement with Melton Borough Council, ensuring local integration and alignment with planning objectives and community needs. The planning application was submitted in January 2026. The PMT continues to support the project by fostering links with Active Together and the County Council's Healthy Workplaces scheme, as well as linking emerging employment opportunities with those most in need.