

JLR and Unipart set to make history in Leicestershire

In order to ensure that the Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) global parts business continues to grow and deliver a high quality of service to customers, the company is consolidating its Jaguar and Land Rover warehousing operations on a purpose-built logistics campus at Mercia Park, adjacent to Junction 11 of the M42 in N.W. Leicestershire.



IM Properties bought the 238-acre site in 2016. Since then, the developer has worked closely with building contractors Winvic to deliver the high quality, sustainable warehousing facility we see today.

Bringing together its two distinct, British brands under one roof is a huge step for JLR. The new campus will replace a number of smaller Jaguar and Land Rover warehouses across the UK. The company's Global Distribution Centre, UK Parts Distribution Centre, Packer Operation, Branded Goods and Customer Services will all be located at Mercia Park. Together, they will deliver a top-class service to JLR retailers and customers around the world and having everything on one site will increase the efficiency of JLR operations and improve their carbon footprint substantially by reducing the need for inter-site transport and the associated emissions by a massive 25%.

In March, 2021, JLR awarded Unipart Logistics a 5-year contract to operate its distribution centres within Mercia Park. Unipart, who already manages JLR warehousing operations around the world, was proud to be selected as sole provider for global aftermarket parts distribution for both brands.

Unipart puts its success down to the company's strength in relationship building and innovative thinking, a strong culture of collaboration, and of course, compelling contract negotiation. Operations Director – Global Automotive, **Ash Evans**, explains, "*Winning this contract is testament to our long-standing commitment to quality and creativity. The solution we offered JLR highlighted our operational excellence and ability to use digital technology to solve problems. These are differentiating factors that fuel Unipart's growth in all our key sectors.*"

Unipart has been working with JLR for more than 30 years. Ash believes that in choosing Unipart to run the new facility, JLR has demonstrated further commitment to their partnership. "*The knowledge and expertise that we have gained from working with JLR over the years, combined with our can-do attitude and cutting-edge technology, have put us in a unique position to help our customer remain competitive in the global automotive market.*"

These iconic British companies are undoubtedly making history, with Mercia Park being one of the largest warehouse developments for a single customer in this country. It is staggering to think that it covers an area equivalent to 26 football pitches! Not only is it impressive in terms of its sheer size, but the new facility has been thoughtfully developed with people, the environment and digital innovation in mind.

Unipart will begin to transition people and products from existing sites to Mercia Park later this year, recruiting externally to meet any shortfall. Activities will ramp up throughout 2023, becoming fully

operational with over 1,000 employees in roles ranging from warehouse operatives and administrators to senior managers.

Unipart really values the knowledge and experience of those already working on the Jaguar and Land Rover contracts, both at Unipart and at Neovia. Known for high levels of employee engagement and a policy of developing and promoting its own people, Unipart is confident that many will choose to transfer, taking advantage of the personal and career development opportunities that the new site represents.

Kerensa Rushton, Unipart's HR Lead for the new facility said, *"Those interested in transferring to Mercia Park will have an early opportunity to visit, and we will provide as much support as we can to help them make an informed decision. Colleagues who currently work with us via an agency will also be encouraged to apply for permanent positions on the new campus."*

"I just know that Mercia Park is going to be a great place to work. Not only are the warehouses themselves pretty impressive, but they are surrounded by over 30 acres of woodland, three small lakes, a 5 km running track and will boast one of the best staff restaurants in the business! Who wouldn't want to work there?"

Committed to ensuring that the new facility is as inclusive as possible, Unipart understands the need for flexible working, including different shift patterns and working hours, different days of the week, and both full-time and part-time working. *"In addition, we are working on a number of sustainable transport initiatives to support colleagues commuting to Mercia Park. These will include new bus routes and car share schemes as well as support for those who are able to cycle or walk to the campus. Last but not least, there will also be a comprehensive training and development programme for all new colleagues, using the very latest in digital technology for an exciting and immersive experience. This really is a great opportunity for internal and external recruits alike to expand their skills, grow their careers, and reach their full potential, whatever their role."*

Unipart will be launching a careers page this month at www.unipartjobs.com/merciam and holding recruitment open days on site at Mercia Park later in the year. In the meantime, anyone interested in finding out more about early opportunities on the new campus can contact merciam@unipart.com to register interest.