

# Second multi-million-pound driverless car testing complex in Leicestershire gets Government backing

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The Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground scheme would work alongside but separately to MIRA's facility



Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground will be used to test driverless vehicles

Another multi-million-pound testing complex is set to be established in Leicestershire as part of the Government's ambition to make the UK a leading centre of research for driverless car technology.

More than £8 million is to be invested in Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground near Lutterworth where 3.8 miles of new roads will be built to simulate a vast range of scenarios seen on the highways network.

The Bruntingthorpe project follows permission being granted earlier this year for a [similar £26 million facility to be developed at MIRA](#) near Higham-on-the-Hill.

The MIRA centre will test limit handling of autonomous vehicles – that is how they perform at high speeds – and Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground will focus on how driverless cars safely negotiate junctions.

The Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground has teamed up automotive engineering and testing firm Applus+ IDIADA for the project which has successful bid for £4 million of Government cash.

Applus+ IDIADA will design the new roads.

Planning permission will be required from [Harborough District Council](#) for the new roads but the area to be developed is all within the boundaries of the former airfield which is already used for conventional vehicle testing and storage and where some 20,000 cars are kept on site.

## When could it open?

If all goes according to plan the new research facility could be complete and open in 18 months though there are elements of testing that can begin before that.

It is estimated the scheme will create some 50 new jobs in addition to the 700-strong workforce based at Bruntingthorpe.

Bosses say they are looking to secure the future of the site as a centre of local employment for the next ten to 15 years.

The Bruntingthorpe upgrade is intended establish a critical piece of testing infrastructure on the site which will allow the testing of almost any vehicle

under almost any scenario in a fully connected, representative environment in a repeatable and controlled manner.

It will be part of efforts to ensure Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) are safe for the road network and have public confidence.

## Bruntingthorpe bosses' view

Proving ground managing Dave Walton said: “Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground and Applus+ IDIADA are delighted to become a part of the vision for the future CAV testing ecosystem in the UK.



David Walton, of the C Walton family business, which owns Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground near Lutterworth

“The site at Bruntingthorpe and the experience of the Bruntingthorpe team, together with IDIADA’s experience in designing and operating proving grounds will allow us to develop a world class CAV facility which will attract intelligent vehicle development activities to the UK.

The project will deliver a highly configurable set of road junctions, ranging from smart motorways to rural roads, all within a fully connected and carefully controlled environment.”