

# **Manufacturer secures new £13m Black Country base**

A family-run Black Country manufacturer is to double the size of its operating base with a new purpose-built factory.

Drywall Steel Sections has been at its existing site in Cradley Heath for more than eight years but has outgrown the facility which it said was no longer fit for modern production methods.

It is now preparing to move to a new 39,500 sq ft factory currently under construction on a brownfield site off Spring Road, in Etingshall.

The £13 million scheme also includes the construction of 17 commercial starter units for SMEs which is expected to create around 150 new jobs.

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The new factory for Drywall, which manufactures structural steel framing as well as systems for wall partitions and ceilings, will enable the firm to safeguard existing jobs and

provide the extra capacity it needs to grow and take on more people in the future.

It is part of a family-owned group of companies set up by Rajinder and Sunita Gupta Itmore than 20 years ago.

Since joining the business five years ago, their son Mayank has taken over as the managing director, having previously worked in television production management and the financial sector.

He said: “The new unit and the smaller units on the park provide a significant contribution to the overall regeneration and economic renaissance currently under way all over the West Midlands.

“We are proud to move our headquarters back to our home city of Wolverhampton, retaining all existing staff, with further plans to create more jobs as the company grows.”

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The company's relocation has been supported by a £9.5 million investment from the West Midlands Combined Authority as part of its long-running programme to regenerate disused brownfield sites across the region.

Part of this investment will be used to cover the cost of dealing with a number of historic mine shafts on the land which has stood vacant and unused since luxury car maker Rolls-Royce stopped using it as a sports ground 15 years ago.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street added: "Throughout what has been a challenging couple of years for our region, we've maintained our commitment to protecting our precious green belt by prioritising investment in the regeneration of brownfield sites in order to provide new, affordable housing for local people and commercial spaces for our job creating businesses.

"This latest investment is a great example of how the authority is deploying its funding to help provide modern, fit-for-purpose premises so that companies like Drywall Steel Sections can grow their businesses, generate jobs and help support our regional recovery.

"I'm pleased we have been able to support them in this way and look forward to seeing them move into their new factory and continue to prosper."

Access to funding for the project was provided by Frontier Development Capital.

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