

# MILLBROOK PROVING GROUND & TECHNOLOGY PARK

MILLBROOK, BEDFORDSHIRE, MK45 2JQ [WWW.MILLBROOK.CO.UK](http://WWW.MILLBROOK.CO.UK)

CASE STUDY



*"It does not feel like we are dealing with a council. It feels as if we are dealing with another private company."*

## THE BUSINESS

Millbrook Group provides vehicle test, validation and engineering services to customers in the automotive, transport, tyre, petrochemical, defence and security industries. It is independent and impartial in everything it does.

At its Proving Ground in the UK (close to M1 junction 13 in Central Bedfordshire), Millbrook has 70km of varied test tracks, including hill routes, high speed areas and challenging off road courses, set in 700 acres of picturesque countryside. Its professional drivers and engineers perform repeatable tests on all types of vehicles in a secure and safe environment. It has a range of test facilities for components and full vehicles. These include engine dynamometers, environmental chambers, crash laboratories and advanced emissions chassis dynamometers.

Millbrook Proving Ground was bought from General Motors (GM) by private equity investors Rutland Partners in 2013. The investment was a huge vote of confidence in the location within the Central Bedfordshire Council area, which perfectly positioned in the 'Midlands Engine' close to a critical mass of high performance technology and automotive companies and close to the home of the Transport Systems Catapult in Milton Keynes.

In terms of jobs in Central Bedfordshire, the business directly employs in excess of 450 people, from professional drivers to engineers. The site is also home to an additional 150 Central Beds jobs, through the other companies based on site.

Millbrook also makes a significant contribution to apprenticeships in Central Bedfordshire with its close relationship to Cranfield University.

Millbrook also has a thriving Events business that offers customers the opportunity to combine top-grade hospitality and catering with access to private test tracks. This makes the facilities ideally suited to product launches or dealer training, with classroom sessions followed by driving experiences. Vehicle manufacturers are able to demonstrate their vehicles to their customers on the very tracks used in development, genuinely a unique selling point.

## THE REQUIREMENTS

Outline planning permission was granted in April 2015 for the additional development scheme, incorporating up to 25,900m<sup>2</sup> of commercial space (B1a, b and c uses) within Millbrook Proving Ground.

The working relationship between Millbrook and Central Bedfordshire Council is so positive that for example, referral commercial property leads for Central Bedfordshire are reciprocally shared to ensure the county as a whole does not miss out on any potential opportunity.

In April 2016, Calsonic Kansei, a global supplier of heat exchange, air conditioning, exhaust, interior, and electronic automotive components, relocated to Bedfordshire, to create a new research and development centre at Millbrook Technology Park.

Darren Ellis, the Head of Business Development, Property Services, at Millbrook, said: "It is very useful to be able to say to our clients and potential clients such as Calsonic that we have a very proactive and engaging Local Authority.

"They have been able to provide in-depth information, including the availability of properties for sale in Bedfordshire, property developments in the pipeline, local schools and information not only for people who visit Bedfordshire but for those who are relocating to

the area."

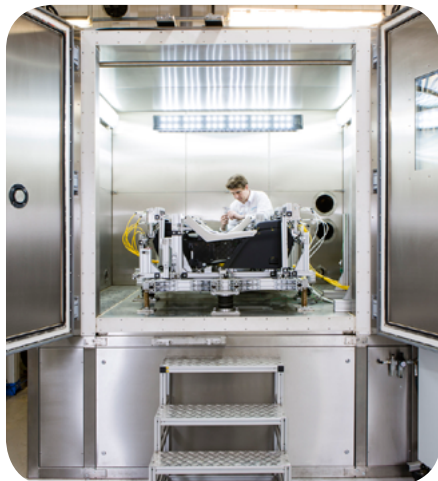
Millbrook Group also works closely with Central Bedfordshire Council with regards to apprenticeships and promotion of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM agenda) to students, especially including girls.

*"We are on a journey and we see Central Bedfordshire Council almost as an integral member of our team and an important stakeholder in future growth and success of our international business (with local roots)"*

**BeCentral Bedfordshire**

# Be Central Bedfordshire

*"Forget your preconceptions of what councils are like because Central Bedfordshire Council don't work with a them and us attitude. They are refreshingly proactive and positive."*



## THE OUTCOMES

Millbrook is currently enjoying a period of substantial investment in its world-leading facilities, ensuring that it remains the pre-eminent facility for all the testing requirements of the dynamic and ever-changing automotive sector.

These aggressive expansion plans are set to increase the number of companies in the county and developments at Millbrook could potentially lead to a further 3,600 jobs being based in this thriving part of the county, which already benefits from the ability to travel from London to Bedfordshire within one hour. Millbrook will also be at the very heart of the new multi-million pound Oxford to Cambridge, East West Rail Line, providing direct access to these markets in under 40 minutes

Darren Ellis said: "We are very comfortable picking up the phone to people at Central Bedfordshire Council. There is always a friendly, helpful person on the other end and they practice joined up engagement with us, which is refreshing.

"On planning issues, they are always happy to steer us in the right direction and provide valuable guidance as to what is possible and what is not. As a company with a strong sense of corporate and social responsibility, we believe it is important to build strong relationships with Central Bedfordshire Council and we are confident that the feeling is mutual.

## THE FUTURE

2016 will see a continuation of the investment in Millbrook's Powertrain facilities and so far has included new engine test cells, control room and fuel blending facilities. A crucial new development for 2016 will be the opening of a new, state of the art, 4WD chassis dyno test cell which will enable Millbrook to test the most technically advanced vehicles in the world.

Beyond the significant Powertrain investment, the crash test facilities of Millbrook's Safety department will benefit from a new roll over testing capability that follows the Servo Sled introduced in 2015. Vehicle testing facilities will also be upgraded with the construction of a new, very large climatic test chamber, which will accommodate almost any wheeled vehicle and replicate the full range of extreme climate conditions.

All of this combines to make the Millbrook Group an integral part of the industries it serves and an ideal partner at any stage in the development and launch of the vehicles of tomorrow...potentially creating many more job vacancies in Central Bedfordshire.

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## Be Central Bedfordshire

For more information, contact the Be Central Bedfordshire team on 0300 300 8272 or via email [info@becentralbedfordshire.co.uk](mailto:info@becentralbedfordshire.co.uk)

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