



## Tourism & Leisure

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The West Midlands is a dynamic, multicultural region. At its heart is the capital city, Birmingham, an international meeting place, with world class sporting, conference and exhibition venues, luxury hotels, and restaurants as well as Europe's leading shopping centre, the BullRing. This contrasts with the predominantly rural west of the region that includes the beautiful countryside of the Malvern Hills; Herefordshire and Shropshire Marches; and parts of the Peak District, the Cotswolds and the National Forest. There are outstanding heritage and cultural attractions throughout the region as well as the unique assets of Shakespeare County, the World Heritage Site at Ironbridge, and the NEC.

### Sector Strengths:

- \* We have world-class conference and exhibition venues, such as the National Exhibition Centre the busiest in Europe in terms of number of exhibitions, International Convention Centre, National Indoor Arena, Telford International Centre, Coventry Arena, Stoneleigh Park and Warwick University
- \* BullRing, Birmingham has the UK's most visited shopping centre with more than 36 million visitors to date
- \* Birmingham International Airport was voted 'Best Business Terminus' in the Business Travel World magazine awards 2003
- \* Alton Towers Theme Park in North Staffordshire is the UK's most visited paid-for attraction. It has also won Meetings and Incentive Travel's "Best UK Unusual Venue" for the past three years
- \* The West Midlands has a wide variety of internationally recognised cultural and arts products include the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford, the Ironbridge World Heritage site, Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Birmingham Royal Ballet, as well as outstanding galleries at Walsall, Wolverhampton and Birmingham