

Finding the space to grow in Norfolk

Where do you go when you outgrow your factory in Norfolk after 10 years of double-digit growth? That was the question facing the owners of Eastern Attachments in Attleborough. "We could have moved anywhere in the UK," says co-founder Philip Leslie, "and actively looked at four sites outside the county. However, we decided to stay for our talented workforce, the manufacturing community and the transport infrastructure, not to mention the excellent quality of life."

Founded in 1996 by four brothers from the West Midlands, the ISO9001 company is now the UK's largest manufacturer of loader attachments for agricultural and construction machinery. Its product range includes buckets, loaders, grabs, forks and sweepers. Philip puts its success down to a relentless focus on innovation across the whole business from design to production.

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"We have always pushed the boundaries of engineering," he explains. "From developing flexible, efficient manufacturing techniques to using advanced materials, our aim has been to make our equipment stronger, lighter and more durable. This has given us a competitive advantage in the UK and internationally.

"For instance, we use X-Form ultra high-strength, low alloy steel in the majority of our products. This has a far greater resistance to deformation than standard mild steels. We are also increasingly

using composites and are working with a local supplier of lightweight, high strength plastic."

The firm has consistently invested in the latest machinery, including laser cutters and automated welding and spraying, to optimise component quality and drive productivity. "We are now building a new facility on the edge of Attleborough with help from Norfolk County Council and the New Anglia LEP,"

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- They are the UK's largest manufacturer of loader attachments for agricultural and construction machinery
- Purpose built production facility



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Why invest in Norfolk?

"The newly dualled A11 is already delivering benefits to our company and was key to our decision to stay. It gives us fast reliable access to the UK road network and the port at Felixstowe. This makes it easier to serve our domestic clients and drive our exports to Europe. On top of that, we have a good rail link to London and are in easy reach of Stansted and Norwich International Airport.

"There are also a surprisingly high number of advanced materials experts in the region, including researchers at Cambridge and the UEA. In fact, Norfolk appears to have more composites companies than any of the other counties we looked at. The New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (NAAME) group and the Hethel Innovation team are encouraging this nucleus of materials experts to share ideas and collaborate more. We are in an excellent position to contribute to and benefit from this network."

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