

# &RB





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# INTRODUCTION

Professor Jane Turner OBE DL, Pro Vice-Chancellor  
(Enterprise and Business Engagement)

These last 12 months have seen some incredible developments at Teesside University.

As you will see in this issue of Research and Business (R&B), our ambition to position ourselves at the heart of the Tees Valley economy shines as bright as ever.

The opening of our new £22.3million National Horizons Centre (p.7) showcases our commitment to bringing together the very best of academia and industry to drive forward innovation and the growth of the biosciences sector.

The facility itself is without parallel in this region, housing leading-edge equipment used in only a handful of laboratories across the world. More importantly, it is also home to world-leading researchers in the growing bioscience sector. Working together with partners in industry, they are tackling challenges that range from creating affordable cancer drugs and improving children’s cancer treatment to helping ensure the safety of the food we eat.

This is vital work, centred on improving the health of our communities and our economy.

In the same way, our new-look Business School (p.10) is playing a major role in creating a flourishing business ecosystem, helping companies to improve productivity and to attract , develop and retain talent.

Other developments include our new University Enterprise Zone status (p.56), the continued success of DigitalCity (p.16) and a new productivity programme, Grow Tees Valley (p.18), which builds upon our established reputation for helping companies reach their potential. These achievements clearly signal that we are not resting on our laurels.

As a University and anchor institution, we will continue to be led by our ambition, working with our partners to grow Tees Valley’s reputation as a region that leads the world for its levels of enterprise, creativity and capability.





# A POWERHOUSE FOR THE UK BIOECONOMY

**Teesside University’s £22.3 million UK centre of excellence for the biosciences industry will deliver a significant boost to the UK bioeconomy.**

This internationally significant asset will play a leading role in enabling global partnerships and meeting the demands of the Government’s Industrial Strategy, catalysing talent development and providing a platform for engagement between research, teaching and industry.

With government plans to double the value of the UK bioeconomy from £220 billion to £440 billion, the National Horizons Centre will deliver crucial technical and management skills, and drive innovation and knowledge development critical for growth, jobs creation and the future prosperity of the Tees Valley and the UK.

And the work at the NHC is already moving forward at pace, underpinned by collaborative partnerships with sector heavyweights, including FujiFilm Diosynth, Waters and the Centre for Process Innovation. Such integrated working with business ensures a firm foundation for the development of industry-relevant training, along with generating a pipeline of work-ready graduates.

The strategic relationship with Waters Corporation has also played a key part in the NHC’s cutting-

edge facilities, including a mass spectrometer that will allow industry partners to make advances in targeted drug development. The NHC is one of only a handful of facilities in the world to possess this capability.

Teesside University Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Professor Paul Croney, says, ‘Our ambition is to bring together academia and industry to drive forward innovation that boosts the regional and national economy. The flagship National Horizons Centre is already proving to be game-changing for the biosciences, big data and digital technology and represents a significant investment as part of our ongoing campus masterplan.’

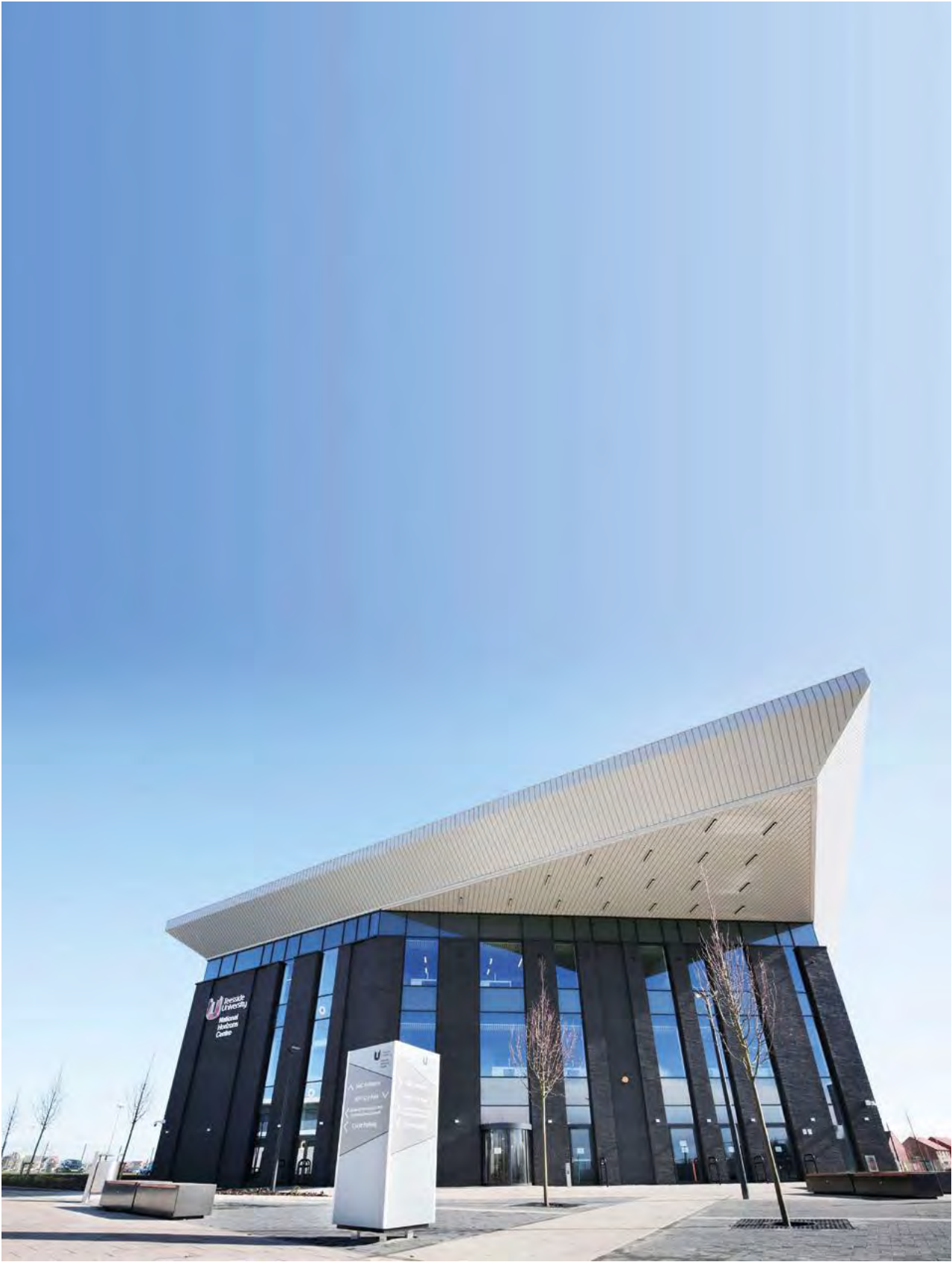
The National Horizons Centre attracted the single biggest Tees Valley investment from the Local Growth Fund, with £17.5m of support secured via the Tees Valley Combined Authority, along with additional funding from the European Regional Development Fund and Teesside University.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen adds, ‘Our region has a rich history of innovation, research and development and the state-of-the-art National Horizons Centre will allow us to be at the forefront of key developments within the hugely important bioscience sector.’





‘The stunning £22.3 million building is home to cutting-edge equipment and world-leading researchers.’





# AN ECOSYSTEM WHERE BUSINESS CAN THRIVE

**T**eesside University Business School is contributing to the transformation of the region’s economy through the creation of a vital entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The new £7.5 million Business School, an international school at the heart of the region, will significantly enhance the £76 million per annum GVA already generated across the Tees Valley and North East by the University’s knowledge transfer and business collaboration activities.

At the heart of its mission is to respond to economic and societal needs, by building and equipping the requisite leaders, managers and innovators of the future and working with business to address productivity issues, embrace innovation and develop the skills and knowledge of the existing workforce.

It is achieving this by developing more entrepreneurs, placing a significant focus on growing a cadre of ethical leaders and managers, enabling access to graduate talent and working with business to directly address the barriers to growth and profitability.

At the Business School’s opening last year, businesses were asked to suggest ways in which they would work with the University to enable an entrepreneurial ecosystem to flourish across the Tees Valley.

Alongside state-of-the art learning facilities and collaborative workspaces, the new Business School has companies, ranging from micro-businesses and SMEs to key North-East businesses, using its facilities and working alongside students, sharing knowledge and innovation.

As well as providing opportunities for students to gain insight into real-world business issues and hone their graduate capabilities, it also provides a forum for collaboration, helping to build a network of engaged students and employers to boost graduate-level job opportunities, keeping key skills and knowledge here in the region.

Teesside University Chancellor Paul Drechsler CBE, says, ‘As President of the CBI, I championed the view that education must equip our young people with so much more than just knowledge.

‘Creativity, thought leadership, risk-taking and envisioning - the skills of an entrepreneur- are also critical.

‘It is refreshing therefore, to see this modern and ambitious business school, founded on the principles of enterprise.’

‘Here we see a commitment to collaboration, team spirit and partnership. There are facilities here to bring together staff, students, business leaders, local community, and an ethos of cooperation.

‘It is this new model that will deliver the business leaders of the future. It cannot be ignored.

‘Since I formally opened the Business School in December 2018 I’ve been incredibly impressed by the momentum it has built. Pace, ambition and collaboration have been key.

‘The University is a key player in this ecosystem and has set out to position the Business School as pivotal to future success, acting as a magnet for talent and a hive of ideas, innovation and inspiration.’





# Taking the next leap forward

A Teesside University Business School programme is helping to support the companies that are best placed to grow the region’s economy.

Eleven ambitious businesses joined the latest cohort of the LEAP 50 programme, which helps companies in the Tees Valley reach their full potential.

The eight-month programme, delivered in conjunction with the Tees Valley Combined Authority, helps scale-up companies meet the challenges of growing their business.

The programme uses entrepreneurial leadership techniques to develop knowledge and experience and consider practical ways of unlocking barriers to growth. It enables business leaders to meet the challenge of accelerating business growth while at the same time leading and managing it successfully.

Caroline Theobald CBE, chairman of FIRST, is one of the course tutors delivering sessions on leadership coaching.

She says, ‘Being an entrepreneur can be a very lonely place particularly if your business is growing.

‘This is a wonderful opportunity for business leaders to gain new knowledge and support each other.’

‘In turn this will help make the businesses more sustainable and contribute to the economic growth of the Tees Valley.’

Dave Wrigley from the Yorkshire Gelato Company adds, ‘I really believe in personal development, you can read so many books but nothing compares to hands-on learning so when I was offered the opportunity to take part in this programme I leapt at the chance.’

Ben Houchen, Tees Valley Mayor, says, ‘We have some amazing start-up companies in the Tees Valley founded by great innovators, entrepreneurs and risk-takers.

‘As these companies scale-up and reach their full potential, they will be the job creators of the future, so it’s incredibly important that we support them as much as possible.’



‘The University is a key player in this ecosystem and has set out to position the Business School as pivotal to future success, acting as a magnet for talent and a hive of ideas, innovation and inspiration.’

Chancellor Paul Drechsler CBE





# SETTING THE BENCHMARK FOR APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION

Teesside University is setting the quality benchmark for apprenticeships, having been among the first higher education institutions in the country to have its level 5 provision subject to a full inspection by Ofsted.

The education watchdog examined the University's Higher Apprenticeship provision across five categories, rating every area as outstanding, from leadership and management, to learner outcomes.

Inspectors praised the University's 'senior leaders' strategic vision for apprenticeships', and were impressed by 'a culture of high expectations' and a curriculum that 'meets the needs of employers and regional economic priorities.'

Teesside's apprenticeships are co-designed with industry. They provide an 'earn as you learn' opportunity, combining vocational work-based learning with study towards a professional qualification.

#### Ofsted assessed Teesside as 'outstanding' in all five areas:

- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare
- Outcomes for learners
- Apprenticeships

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Professor Paul Croney says, 'Our vision is to position Teesside as an international university with a reputation for academic excellence. Higher and Degree Apprenticeships are designed and flourish because of our exceptional work with business and our commitment to providing the very best student and learning experience.'

The Ofsted report praised Teesside University's resources and learning environments and referred to how apprentices grow in confidence throughout their course.

Professor Jane Turner OBE DL, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Business Engagement), says, 'We are committed to helping businesses in the Tees Valley and beyond thrive and prosper, and that can only happen with people learning the right skills to enable them to perform to the highest standard in their job roles.'

At the time of the inspection, Teesside University had just under 300 students enrolled on Higher Apprenticeships. Just over half of those were studying the Nursing Associate Apprenticeship, while others were on Laboratory Scientist or Healthcare Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeships.

**'We are committed to helping businesses in the Tees Valley and beyond thrive and prosper, and that can only happen with people learning the right skills to enable them to perform to the highest standard in their job roles.'**



# A VITAL CATALYST FOR TECH GROWTH

A Teesside University-led programme has been acknowledged as a vital catalyst for the growth of the Tees Valley tech sector.

**DigitalCity is a Teesside University-led initiative which works to connect businesses with the knowledge, skills and expertise they need to thrive in a digital future. It achieves this through an ambitious plan which focuses on five key areas as a catalyst for digital growth:**

- Creating a new generation of digital businesses
- Supporting the growth of businesses through digital
- Transforming sectors with digital knowledge
- Preparing businesses for Industry 4.0
- Growing digital skills and talent

A report published by Teesside University, 'DigitalCity—Powering Business Growth in our Region', showcases how DigitalCity has been working with the University to meet the challenges posed by the Government's Industrial Strategy.

**Successful initiatives highlighted in the report include:**

- Helping the Tees Valley achieve its goal of increasing start-ups by 25% by 2025: Since its inception in 2017, 73 teams have pitched their ideas to Launchpad FUEL - an enterprise programme which offers funding, workspace and support to graduate entrepreneurs - with 28 winning funding and entering the scheme. In addition, since April 2018, 35 DigitalCity Fellowships have been awarded.
- Increasing the number of scale-up companies which are key to economic growth: A total of 39 companies have taken part in three cohorts of the DigitalCity SCALE programme which works with ambitious businesses to help them scale and grow their businesses through innovation.
- Making business more competitive through the use of digital technology: From January 2017 to July 2019 DigitalCity helped 208 businesses across the seven Tees Valley priority sectors to improve their digital knowledge and compete more efficiently.

The success of DigitalCity saw it pick up the Knowledge Exchange/Transfer Initiative of the Year trophy at the 2018 Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards (THELMAs), for its contribution to economic growth in the area.

'We've got a fantastic reputation in this field, with world-class developers and firms calling our region home. With DigitalCity continuing to play a vital role in our offering, Tees Valley's digital future is bright.'

The University is also addressing the need for more digital skills in the region. The School of Computing, Engineering & Digital Technologies offers a range of courses, such as the degree apprenticeship in Digital and Technology Solutions, to meet the demand for roles such as web engineers.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said: 'DigitalCity's outstanding contribution to keeping this key sector thriving is making waves across the UK.'

'We've got a fantastic reputation in this field, with world-class developers and firms calling our region home. With DigitalCity continuing to play a vital role in our offering, Tees Valley's digital future is bright.'



## HUNDREDS OF COMPANIES HELPED BY INNOVATE TEES VALLEY

Hundreds of companies have been helped to innovate and grow, thanks to a ground-breaking partnership led by Teesside University.

‘The programme’s record of success in enhancing collaboration, growing innovation capacity and creating high-quality, well-paid career opportunities speaks for itself. Its successful delivery is a credit to Teesside University.’

▲ **372** Target: 297  
SMEs supported

▲ **40** Target: 25  
New jobs in SMEs

▲ **144** Target: 114  
New products to market and/or firm

The Innovate Tees Valley project, which began in November 2016 and ended in July 2019, has also helped businesses in the region develop 144 new products and create over 40 jobs to date.

Innovate Tees Valley was delivered by the University in conjunction with the North East Process Industry Cluster (NEPIC), the Materials Processing Institute (MPI) and DigitalCity, to help companies build capacity, create new products and services and enter new markets.

Part-funded by an ERDF grant, and supported by the Tees Valley Combined Authority, the initiative has helped to deliver a significant increase in the number of innovation-active SMEs. It has created a lasting impact on the region’s productivity and innovation culture, by increasing new products and services, knowledge-base connectivity, export potential, and know-how.

### The achievements of Innovate Tees Valley include:

- 372 SMEs supported (target: 297)
- 40 new jobs in SMEs (target 25)
- 144 products new to market and/or firm (target 114)

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen says, ‘Innovate Tees Valley has been a hugely successful initiative. The number of local companies that have taken advantage of this programme shows just how entrepreneurial and ambitious our region’s businesses are.

‘The programme’s record of success in enhancing collaboration, growing innovation capacity and creating high-quality, well-paid career opportunities speaks for itself. Its successful delivery is a credit to Teesside University.’

Services offered by Innovate Tees Valley included mentoring, academic consultancy, innovation advice and support, access to export networks and part-funded graduate placements and knowledge exchange internships.

Following the conclusion of the current phase of Innovate Tees Valley, the University has launched the Grow Tees Valley programme to work with SMEs to increase productivity.

The new programme will give businesses the opportunity to explore product development, with 50% funding from Growth Spark grants (average total project value of £15,000), as well as access to the Growth Associate Programme supplying graduate talent with a benefit of a 50% salary contribution and support from an industry expert or an academic.

For more information visit  
[www.tees.ac.uk/growteesvalley](http://www.tees.ac.uk/growteesvalley)





# THE SOUND OF SUCCESS

From the heart of Middlesbrough’s Boho zone, an innovative company is helping learners across the world to improve their command of English. David Roberts, meets Katy Parkinson the founder of Sound Training.

**A**ngry and frustrated, a Year 9 boy challenged Katy Parkinson. ‘I can’t read that word. I don’t understand. It doesn’t make sense.’

It might have seemed a typical overreaction from a teenager struggling with his school work. But, as a direct result of that outburst, Sound Training, a company which is now exporting its ground-breaking learning techniques from America to the Middle East was founded.

It was 1999 and Katy Parkinson was employed by Middlesbrough Council as a language coordinator and working with a group of under-achieving Year 9 boys at Ormesby Comprehensive.

Somewhat ironically the word which had triggered the boy’s distress was ‘patient’.

‘He just couldn’t grasp that was how the word read,’ says Katy. ‘I’d been doing reciprocal reading with him and using phonics to decode the words, but it wasn’t working. It occurred to me that what we were teaching them wasn’t accurate.’

From this lightbulb moment, the germ of an idea formed in Katy’s mind and she started exploring new ways in which children with special educational needs could be taught language more effectively. Her initial attempts focussed on getting youngsters to recognise the syllables within words at speed and, from there, recognise the words themselves.

This method met with considerable impact, in terms of the learner’s reading age. However, it was not enough.

‘There was one girl who made massive progress – 20 months in six weeks,’ recalls Katy. ‘But when I asked her how this was affecting her schoolwork, she said it made no difference.’

‘Although she could recognise the words when reading them she didn’t understand what they meant when the teacher used them in class.’

‘It was then that I realised that vocabulary was the biggest stumbling block.’

She then focussed her efforts on how to upskill the vocabulary of her learners. Using the concept of ‘fun Latin’, she developed a programme which teaches students how to parse the meaning of a word from its constituent parts.

Using the word ‘extraction’ as an example, she explains that students are taught that the suffix ‘tion’ means the act of doing something.

Then, there’s ‘ex’ which is in the word ‘exit’ – to go out. And then, ‘tract’ which is contained in the word ‘tractors’ which pull things.

Putting them all together the students can work out for themselves that extraction means the act of pulling something out.

In this way and by using repetition and speed – up to 148 syllable soundings in a minute – Sound Training programmes quickly help learners to improve their literacy and language. It may seem a simple concept, but it’s one which has been incredibly effective.



In 2012, Katy took the decision to leave Middlesbrough Council and launch Sound Training. With the help of DigitalCity and staff at Teesside University, she was given advice about the company's intellectual property and support to set up and develop the business.

Now housed in a converted bank in Middlesbrough's Boho zone, the company has grown to employ 24 permanent staff with a further 40 supply teachers helping to upskill and train educators to deliver the programmes offered by Sound Training.

The Lexonik Advance programme which was developed from those early sessions has now been delivered to more than 70,000 learners

The pilot has proved a success, with students making significant progress, and Sound Training is now in discussion with the University to investigate how the model can be scaled and rolled out further.

It's partnerships like this that Katy believes are crucial to the success of the business and why she enjoys working in the Tees Valley.

'I've absolutely no desire to move,' she says. 'We have some really great networks here and we've proven that we can run a successful business in this part of the country.'

'We are working in places like Dubai and Oman and my ambition is to have centres

What drives me is not the profits or the size of the business,' she says. 'For me, it's about helping as many people as we can through the programme.'

across the world. The company's client list includes educators from Florida and Maine in the United States to the United Arab Emirates

Sound Training operates by licensing its programmes out to education institutions, providing support and educational materials and also analysis to make sure that the programme is being operated effectively and making the most impact on learners.

While the majority of clients are schools and colleges, the company has also done work with prisons. Recently it also partnered with Teesside University on a pilot project to help train overseas students from China and Malaysia improve their English language and reading skills to prepare them for academic life in England.

of excellence in places like that, but I don't see us uprooting from here.'

Katy admits that when she began her career teaching Home Economics she never envisaged that it would develop into running an international business.

However, education remains her key motivation.

'What drives me is not the profits or the size of the business,' she says. 'For me, it's about helping as many people as we can through the programme.'

'People will never take pleasure in reading if they find it challenging. So it's fantastic when we hear that people are all of a sudden beginning to read on their own thanks to our programmes.'





# BUSINESS FOCUS

With **Laura Woods**  
Director of Academic Enterprise

## Graduates, business and the world of work: Creating the Teesside edge

Globalisation, technological change, the productivity challenge – we all know the drivers behind our skills challenge. And “soft” skills are arguably just as critical to a competitive knowledge economy as defined skillsets: employers need people who are not just technically competent, but who have the mindset to add value and be ready to cope with change.

In any skills discussion with employers, that’s the message that comes out, time and again.

Universities know how critical it is for graduates to make a positive difference in the world of work. Here at Teesside, we’ve made a major investment in employability – because we want Teesside graduates, and businesses, to have the edge on the competition.

Employability and entrepreneurship are right at the heart of our mission to transform lives and economies by broadening horizons, equipping students for success, and supporting businesses with access to talent.

Our approach puts students and employers front and centre, drawing maximum benefit from our strong business links.

We’re committed to ensuring a meaningful work experience for every undergraduate. Employers are actively engaged in work-related curriculum

activities across the piece, and an extensive offer to business delivers real-world opportunities.

Clinics and studios covering disciplines like law, business and digital, put student teams to work on real-time business projects and challenges.

University-wide placements and internships provide talent to deliver specific business projects; student volunteers undertake thousands of hours of community work, delivering real social benefits; while we support employers by matching candidates to hundreds of vacancies each year.

Companies with growth plans can take on graduate associates or be helped to develop prestigious Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.

Our latest initiative, Advantage Tees Valley, supports students from disadvantaged backgrounds to build successful graduate careers here in the region.

And finally, we’re delivering hundreds of apprenticeships – for young people, an excellent way of developing those critical attributes.

There’s always room for improvement, but we’re confident that together with business we’re helping to create that advantage for graduates and employers that leads to success – the Teesside edge.





# FORGING MEMORIES OF TEESSIDE'S STEELMAKING HISTORY

The region's steelmaking heritage and the memories of generations who worked in the industry are being preserved through the Steel Stories exhibition.

The interactive exhibition at Kirkleatham Museum in Redcar features artefacts and photographs, many loaned by local people, which share the stories of the steel workers who shaped our industrial legacy.

Also included are archive films, a 3D printed model of Redcar blast furnace and a recreational locker room depicting working life through the decades to help visitors imagine what the daily toil was like for the workers.

Leo Croft, Redcar & Cleveland Council's Steel Stories project officer, says, 'Ex-steel workers and their families have told us some incredible stories and donated items. It's interactive, noisy and will make for some brilliant photos. About the only thing we can't recreate is the heat from the furnaces.'

Teesside University researchers were closely involved in months of community engagement and research involved in putting together the exhibition. Hours of memories were preserved by Vlogbase to help researchers document an oral history.

Professor Natasha Vall, Associate Dean (Research & Innovation) in Teesside University's School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Law, says, 'Some truly inspirational and remarkable stories have been uncovered.'

During the first month of the exhibition, more than 10,000 people passed through the doors, with visitors able to see Steel Stories until April 2020.

Steel Stories is part funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and Tees Valley Combined Authority and supported by Teesside University.

## Preserving memories for future generations

Vlogbase digitised more than 35 hours of audio recordings of men and women connected with the former SSI plant at Redcar.

Those memories, talking about the significance of Teesside's steel industry and its impact upon the world, play an important role in the Steel Stories project.

Vlogbase, founded by Teesside University graduates Luke Stephenson and Andy Surtees, developed online software to allow users to scan through video and audio content using search engine functionality.

Teesside University researchers were able to use Vlogbase's technology to quickly access pertinent information in the recordings by typing a relevant term, with the artificial intelligence software able to recognise words and objects in digital content.

**'Ex-steel workers and their families have told us some incredible stories and donated items. It's interactive, noisy and will make for some brilliant photos. About the only thing we can't recreate is the heat from the furnaces.'**



# A FRUITFUL COLLABORATION

As the operator of Teesport – one of the UK’s busiest ports – PD Ports plays a vital role in the infrastructure of the region’s economy.

Key to its success is an ongoing partnership with Teesside University which has now been in operation for more than a decade.

In 2009, the first cohort of 15 PD Ports staff began a Leadership and Management Foundation Degree at Teesside University. Initial work to map out and accredit the degree started in 2007 as the University joined forces with the port operator to develop a qualification which was specific to the needs of the business and would provide a progression route for managers and employees with potential.

Since then, the two organisations have collaborated on a number of projects including Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, consultancy, undergraduate work experience, hosting educational visits and degree programme approval panels.

Most recently, Teesside University and PD Ports worked together to develop a new bespoke Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) to support the development of future leaders for the port and logistics operator.

An initial cohort of 20 management staff from across the business have signed up for this degree apprenticeship, which is designed to give participants the skills, knowledge and experience to lead the business in the years ahead.

The apprenticeship gives employees the opportunity to learn theoretical knowledge to underpin the practical skills developed whilst carrying out their daily roles.

Those taking part include individuals from a variety of roles and locations across the business including both senior and up and coming managers within operational and commercial areas, the in-house training department and Harbour Police.

David Wilson, Group HR Manager for PD Ports, says, ‘We have worked in partnership with Teesside University’s business school for over 10 years. This strong link and a deep understanding of our business allows us to work together to provide programmes that will be suitable for our people and our business.

‘The CMDA marks a significant and important step in developing our future leaders as we continue to grow and adapt in a fast-changing market.

‘Teesside University’s business school leads the field in terms of employer engagement and by developing this bespoke CMDA for us has proved once again that they can deliver an exceptional learning experience with the right blend of academic excellence, entrepreneurial thinking and real-life application that meet the requirements of the local business community.’



Emily Clarke apprentice civil engineer



# Engineering a bright future

The partnership between PD Ports and Teesside University is paying dividends for 19-year-old Emily Clark.

The former Bede College Sixth Form student is employed by the port operator as an apprentice civil engineer and is combining her work with studying for an HNC Civil Engineering at Teesside University.

On completion of her HNC, she will then progress onto an undergraduate degree as part of a progression programme which will ultimately see her qualify as a chartered civil engineer.

Emily joined PD Ports after undertaking a 12-month programme with the Tees Valley Logistics Academy at Stockton Riverside College and was offered the apprenticeship after the port operator identified her as a good fit for the company.

‘I always wanted to be an engineer, so it’s fantastic to get this position,’ says Emily. ‘I originally wanted to be a mechanical engineer, but then the more I started learning about it, the more I wanted to do civil engineering.’

‘There’s so much variety to the job. We look after the whole site from top to bottom so I can be doing anything from maintenance projects to office refurbishments. One day I might be surveying the fenders on the quays and the next I might be on top of one of the warehouses checking the roof.’

‘I go to University one day a week where I learn the theory and then can apply that to my work at Teesport.’

‘I’ve no regrets about not taking the traditional route of going to university after college. This way I’m getting paid while I learn.’

‘I always wanted to be an engineer, so it’s fantastic to get this position,’ says Emily. ‘I originally wanted to be a mechanical engineer, but then the more I started learning about it, the more I wanted to do civil engineering.’



## Timeline

- 2009
  - 15 staff begin the inaugural Leadership and Management Foundation degree.
  - Consultancy about how to implement a new Enterprise Resource Planning system.
- 2010
  - A Level 4 probationer-training programme developed for the Harbour Police.
  - Security Officer training course developed.
- 2011
  - Consultancy provided for business process management.
- 2012
  - Second cohort of 15 students start on the Leadership and Management Foundation Degree.
- 2014
  - Student placement with the School of Science & Engineering.
- 2017
  - Project with Teesside University Business Clinic.
- 2018
  - Consultancy for a team leader professional development programme.
- 2019
  - 20 management staff start on the bespoke Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship.



# MY BUSINESS JUST WILLIAMS

Jessica Williams founded sales outsourcing business Just Williams in 2016. Based at Fusion Hive in Stockton, the company has grown to 10 employees, and designs, develops and implements outsourced sales solutions to assist its clients to raise their brand profile and develop new business opportunities. The company has also recently launched a sales training academy.

I don't like to follow the norm. I started Just Williams because I wanted to professionalise the sales industry and disrupt the traditional model to make it more efficient and effective.

I worked in banking for 11 years and then for the Entrepreneurs Forum. So I'm not from a traditional sales background, although there was a sales element in every job I had.

Working with SMEs it was very apparent that one of the biggest barriers to growth was finding and retaining great sales people. Yet despite this, sales has got a really bad reputation with lots of negative connotations.

I wanted to change that. My business ethos is all about relationships where people come first.

There's been some fantastic developments in technology but there will always be a need for human interaction in sales. People want to see the whites of the eyes of the people they're dealing with and form relationships over a long term basis.

My values and philosophy are based on 'brilliant basics, magic touches'. It's about doing what you say, doing it well and adding value to the client.

I did my MBA at Teesside University Business School and it gave me a fantastic foundation for when I set up my own business. So when I was asked to join the Business School advisory board I jumped at the chance.

The new-look Business School, represents such a huge opportunity for the Tees Valley. I wanted to work with it to ensure that businesses knew how to engage properly with it and that the University was aware of what skills employers required.

I'm passionate about this region, it's a hidden gem. It's an area where you can live, work, play and learn and the more we invest it into the more we will all achieve.

There's a real ambition here to work together. I think we need to join the dots more between the local and regional businesses as where we've seen the most success is where everyone has been cooperating and collaborating

One of the things I love is how resilient the people in the Tees Valley are. When you reflect back at where we have come from and all the things that have been achieved it's absolutely fantastic.





## WIRELESS TECH FOR GEARBOX CHECK

**A** new product is set to revolutionise train locomotive maintenance by using Internet of Things technology.

Transmission Dynamics, based in Cramlington, Northumberland, has developed a Smart Oil Plug which can continuously monitor the condition and performance of rail assets minimising the need for costly rebuilds.

The company manufactures wireless telemetry and data acquisition systems for use in a variety of sectors including renewable energy, mining, marine, defence, automotive and rail.

It developed the concept of a wireless smart device which could provide remote condition monitoring for gearboxes and report on unusual vibrations, metal particles and oil temperature.

The concept is the first of its kind as other external monitoring systems using wired technology were quickly damaged by debris from the rail track with the only other alternative being to take apart and overhaul gearboxes at shorter intervals.

Business innovation managers from Teesside University supported Transmission Dynamics to apply for a grant worth almost £500,000 from Innovate UK, the UK's innovation agency, to develop a bespoke testing facility and prototype Smart Oil Plug.

The trial exceeded expectations and the Smart Oil Plug not only reports back on the condition of the gearbox, but can also be used to analyse the quality of the rail track, the axles, wheels and bearings and even the engine.

Transmission Dynamics is now in talks with rail operators to test the plug on live trains.

Professor Jarek Rosinski, Chief Executive of Transmission Dynamics, says, 'We're very excited by the potential of the Smart Oil Plug and are already looking into further applications for the technology.'



## DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

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# RESEARCH ROUNDUP



Research at Teesside University is about making a significant and practical difference to people's lives, the society in which we live and the success of business and economies. Recent work has seen an array of subject areas addressed, including challenging youth racism, addressing sexual consent education and the use of virtual reality for pain management.

## Finding an alternative to help people with persistent pain

The University is part of a pioneering international project which is spearheading the use of virtual reality to help people living with persistent pain.

It is one of the partners in the 2.4 million euros VR4Rehab project, along with universities, hospitals and industry in the Netherlands, UK, France, Germany and Belgium.

Through the University's Centre for Rehabilitation, Exercise and Sport Sciences (CRESS) and its Healthcare Innovation Centre (HIC), experts at Teesside are heading up the persistent pain theme of the project.

Teams of digital designers and experts in pain management from across Europe were invited to the University's Darlington campus to present virtual reality products which could potentially assist people living with persistent pain. Two companies were then chosen to work with Teesside University to help bring the products to market.

The first were Get Out, based in Nijmegen, Holland, who have developed a virtual reality game to help people with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome.

The second were SyncVR, from Rotterdam, who are developing a virtual reality platform for the Pain Toolkit, a world-leading website which provides advice and support for people with persistent pain.

Professor Denis Martin from CRESS, who is leading the Teesside University work, says, 'Virtual reality technology is something that is developing rapidly and it certainly has the potential to make a positive impact to help people manage and overcome persistent pain.'

'The technology is very exciting, but it also has to be useful. By combining the technology with our expertise, we can take full advantage of the increase of virtual reality.'

## Calls for children to learn about consent from an earlier age

Research has found that dangerous stereotypical beliefs around sexual violence and consent are evident among children as young as 11.

Youngsters are subscribing to common myths around victim blaming, female dress and location when it comes to perceptions of sexual consent.

Jennifer Cassarly, who is carrying out a psychology PhD at Teesside University, conducted a study with groups of 11 to 13-year-olds at three schools in Northern England.

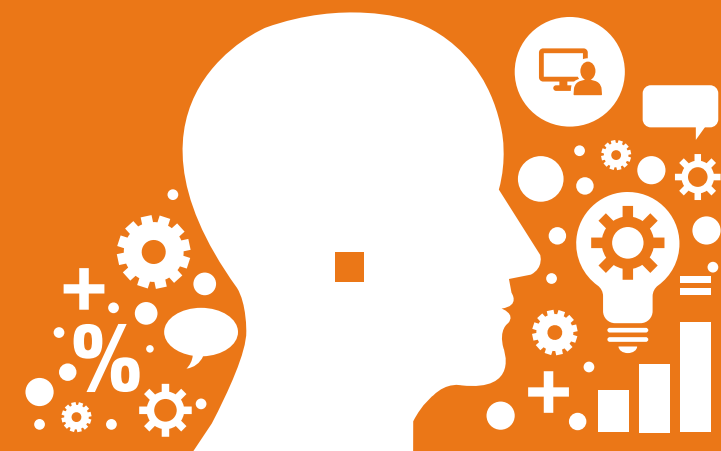
She presented the youngsters with three fictional scenarios, all of which involved verbal coercion by the male in the story and were designed to explore ideas around sexual consent.

Alarming, the overwhelming majority of both boys and girls endorsed a number of commonly held sexual violence myths.

Jennifer is calling for more comprehensive education from the age of 11 upwards, tackling consent and how it is communicated.

She says, 'The conversations focussed on what the female could have done to either prevent the situations from occurring in the first place, or stop the situations from escalating. The youngsters were holding her more responsible than the male protagonist.'

'We are in danger of normalising these kinds of thoughts and we need to be speaking to young people about consent and how it is communicated.'







### Island communities to benefit from energy expertise

Energy experts are involved in an ambitious international research project which has the potential to make significant savings on the cost of energy consumption across islands in Europe.

Teesside University is one of the partners in the 10 million euros REACT project. REACT is co-funded by Horizon 2020, the largest ever EU research and innovation programme, with nearly 80 billion euros funding available over seven years.

It aims to demonstrate the benefits of renewable energy systems on geographical islands to bring economic benefits, contribute to the decarbonisation of local energy systems, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

Over four years, it is hoped the project can reduce the cost of energy by up to 60%, saving hundreds of millions of euros across Europe and reducing the annual cost of energy bills by 360 euros per average household.

On geographical islands, energy can cost 400 times more than it does on the mainland due to the use of predominantly diesel generators which are expensive to maintain.

In total, there are 23 organisations from across Europe involved in REACT and Teesside University is the only project partner from England. It has been awarded almost 625,000 euros and will work to identify the social and economic benefits of largely autonomous energy systems on geographical islands.

The Teesside University REACT team is made up of Principal Investigator Tracey Crosbie, Michael Short and Gobind Pillai, all from the School of Science, Engineering & Design, as well as Maryam Shadman-Pajouh, from Teesside University Business School.

They form part of Teesside University's Smart Systems and Energy Informatics Research Group, which carries out a range of work around intelligent sensing, control and informatics and energy-related applications.



### Project helps young people challenge racism

Thousands of young people in the region feel more empowered to challenge and report racism.

But the normalisation of racist language in popular culture, negative stereotypes in the media and some family and communal influences are still perpetuating racist views among the younger generation.

Those are the findings of the Challenging Youth Racism report published by academics at Teesside University and practitioners from Humankind.

Challenging Youth Racism (CYR) has been a three year project and the team delivered over 350 workshops to more than 7,000 young people across the North East region.

The anti-racism interventions, delivered to people aged from 11 to 19, were designed to increase acceptance of others, increase awareness about the impact of racism and encourage young people to challenge and report racism when they see it.

In addition to the workshops, the CYR team also provided one day Racism Awareness Programmes (RAP) and have

trained over 150 RAP ambassadors to educate others and provide support for those affected by racism.

The project was praised by Sara Khan, the government's Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism, who attended a conference to launch the findings of the report.

She explains, 'This project shows how dialogue and open, diverse debate are important tools in countering extremism.'

'It is also proof of how much can be achieved by giving young people the information and the tools to unpick and challenge hateful narratives.'

**As a result of the workshops carried out by the project:**

- 74% of young people increased their willingness to challenge or report racist behaviour
- 65% of young people increased their understanding of how racist behaviour impacts people
- 85% of young people maintained or increased their acceptance of people of a different religion, nationality and/or skin colour.





# TWENTY YEARS OF ANIMEX CELEBRATED AT TEESSIDE

From the voice of Bart Simpson to visual effects legend Ray Harryhausen, some of the best known and respected names in animation have visited Teesside University for the annual Animex festival over the years.

Animex, which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, each year brings a global line-up of animation and game industry experts to Teesside University.

Movie legend Ray Harryhausen, the Oscar-winning stop-motion pioneer behind film effects seen in classic films such as Jason & The Argonauts, Clash of the Titans, One Million Years BC and Sinbad & the Eye of the Tiger, visited Animex on several occasions to talk about his work.

Other major names attracted to speak at Animex have included Nancy Cartwright, the voice of one the world's best known animated characters, Bart Simpson.

Instantly recognisable names such as Walt Disney Animation Studios and Pixar, which are synonymous with box office animated hits such as Finding Nemo, Frozen, Monsters Inc, Pocahontas, Moana and Toy Story, have regularly sent speakers to Animex.

More recent speakers have shared insight into what it was like to work on the original Star Wars trilogy, the Jurassic Park films, the Lord of the Rings trilogy and Twilight trilogy, along with an expert who helped to bring the fire breathing dragons to life in television blockbuster Game of Thrones.

Tim Brunton, Animex Project Manager and principal lecturer in the University's School of Computing, Engineering & Digital Technologies, says

'We are amazed when we look back at names which Animex has attracted to Teesside over the past twenty years and we continue to be delighted by the calibre of guest speakers who continue to attend.'



'We are amazed when we look back at names which Animex has attracted to Teesside over the past twenty years and we continue to be delighted by the calibre of guest speakers who continue to attend.'





# Blueprint for artists of the future

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Future generations of professional artists are being nurtured through the Teesside University teaching provision Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA).

Drawing on MIMA's global professional networks of artists and institutional partners, Teesside University's arts courses relocated to MIMA School of Art & Design in 2019, with the latest cohort of students now on course in the new setting.

With MIMA as a creative hub, students will have opportunities to connect with world-leading artists as they prepare new exhibitions, along with established curators working on commissions, projects and collections.

The new school builds upon the University's successful Art & Design courses which include BA, MA and PhD specialisms in photography, performance, experimental digital work and studio practice taught by practising international artists.

**'Artists have an important role to play in our complex, global environment and the establishment of a MIMA School of Art enables us to nurture, develop and support significant new talent for the future.'**

**Laura Sillars, MIMA Director**

As a renowned international museum with a civic mission and community engagement at its heart, MIMA now also has a role in helping new generations of artists to successfully begin their creative working lives.

MIMA Director Laura Sillars says, 'Artists have an important role to play in our complex, global environment and the establishment of a MIMA School of Art & Design enables us to nurture, develop and support significant new talent for the future. It is a meaningful move marking considerable support from Teesside University which will allow a truly exceptional experience for our students.'

Professor Paul Croney, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Teesside University, says, 'The exposure that our students will get from being part of an award-winning working museum with a strong international reputation will enhance their experience and improve their employability. At the same time it will allow fine art staff to benefit from the excellent community links that MIMA has developed.'



# INTERNATIONAL FUNDING TO INVESTIGATE THE AI RACE

Researchers secured a prestigious grant to study the global race to develop powerful artificial intelligence (AI).



Teesside was one of just ten universities around the world to receive funding from The Future of Life Institute, a US-based volunteer-run research and outreach organisation that works to mitigate existential risks facing humanity.

Led by Dr The Anh Han, Senior Lecturer in Computer Science, academics will work with international colleagues to monitor how countries and organisations are developing new technologies that could change the world.

Dr Han says, ‘We are delighted to have been awarded this grant by the Future of Life Institute to progress our research. Our ambition is to understand the dynamics of safety-compliant behaviours within the ongoing AI research and development race.

**If AI is not developed in a safe way, it could have catastrophic consequences.**  
Dr The Anh Han

Dr Han explains that the biggest players in AI at the moment include the United States of America and China, but other countries, and companies from all over the world, are now getting involved.

As they bid to secure a competitive advantage, many countries are potentially putting lives at risk by compromising safety in order to win the AI race.

‘Several European countries are catching up and the UK in particular is heavily investing in AI technology. Lots of money and effort is being put into becoming the first to develop powerful AI,’ says Dr Han.

He adds, ‘There is a temptation to cut corners on safety compliance in order to move more quickly than competitors. But if AI is not developed in a safe way, it could have catastrophic consequences. ‘Through our research, we want to understand what sort of behaviours emerge and how we can use different, efficient incentives to drive the race in a more beneficial direction.’



The National Horizons Centre (NHC) is a new £22.3m purpose-built research, education and training facility for the biosciences sector, located in Central Park, Darlington.

Collaborating with industry partners the NHC will play a pivotal role in tackling biosciences sector challenges, delivering outstanding technical, leadership and digital skills, world-class research and innovation, and excellence in teaching.



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TEES VALLEY MAYOR





# MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING

## Understanding the way you work

**Teesside University has a strong reputation for forging links with business.**

To help bolster these partnerships, the University has signed several Memorandums of Understanding with business and organisations across the region.

The strategic partnerships are a joint commitment from both partners to collaborate and share experience and expertise. They help to provide industry experience for students, masterclasses and an additional graduate recruitment drive.

Partners will also work closely with the University on research or collaborate on technical projects or continuous professional development programmes.

Working this way makes the University more attuned to the needs of the business, helping it to grow and thereby

offering greater opportunities for students and graduates. One such example is the MOU recently signed with the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI).

Nigel Perry MBE, Chief Executive Officer of CPI, says, 'By working more strategically in partnership with Teesside University we can accelerate the provision of the knowledge and infrastructure that attracts, supports and grows companies and which helps to provide new jobs and new products for the UK.'

'This Memorandum of Understanding will drive close collaboration, enabling research, and driving skills and local economic development – for the benefit of both our organisations, the local economy and wider scientific and manufacturing networks.'

## Memorandums of Understanding signed by the University include:

1. Animmersion – Middlesbrough
2. Connect Health Newcastle
3. County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Darlington
4. CPI Wilton, Redcar
5. Cubic Transportation Systems Stockton
6. Double Eleven Middlesbrough
7. Hartlepool Sixth Form College Hartlepool
8. Ithica Films Middlesbrough
9. Learning Curve Group Spennymoor, County Durham
10. Odyssey Systems Preston Farm, Stockton
11. Public Health South Tees Middlesbrough and Redcar
12. Tees Valley Education Middlesbrough



'By working more strategically in partnership with Teesside University we can accelerate the provision of the knowledge and infrastructure that attracts, supports and grows companies and which helps to provide new jobs and new products for the UK.'

Nigel Perry MBE, Chief Executive Officer of CPI



# BUSINESS CLINIC

No one pretends that running a business is all plain sailing. Steve Dougan, Head of Enterprise at Teesside University, gives his three top tips about what to do when the going gets rough.

## 1. SEEK OUT ADVICE:

You'll be surprised how many successful entrepreneurs are willing to share the benefit of their experience. Whether you want to go down the route of a formal non-executive directorship or simply share ideas over a cup of coffee, listen to what other people have to say.

## 2. RETURN TO THE WHY:

When times are hard it can be very useful to go back to why you started your business in the first place. What was the company created to do? Take some time to reflect on whether you have stayed true to the founding principles that made you so successful in the first place.

## 3. PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS:

I call this the Toys R Us test. The toy retailer had the best brand recognition and biggest store footprint. But when it came up against competition from the internet, instead of creating amazing physical retail spaces something online stores can't compete with it responded by opening a generic webstore like any other.





# STRATOSPHERIC SUCCESS FOR ROCKET SCIENTISTS

StratoBooster, a business founded by two Teesside University aerospace engineering students, won a major start-up competition.

The company was chosen as having the 'Highest Growth Potential' and named as the 'Ones to Watch' in the 2018 If We Can You Can (IWCYC) challenge.

Founders Andrew Dunn and Ben Massey this year completed their BEng (Hons) Aerospace Engineering degrees.

StratoBooster was set up as a 'spin-out' from a student-led space exploration project, and the team is now working on researching, designing and constructing a small satellite launch platform.

The business also received £3,000 investment from the University Alliance.

Andrew and Ben completed the DigitalCity Fellowship Accelerator programme which works with Tees Valley entrepreneurs to offer funding, workshops and bespoke consultancy.

As a result of winning the IWCYC Challenge, the pair received business support, including mentoring and a trip to a European conference.

Andrew says, 'It was fantastic to win this competition. Not only was it great to get the recognition, but it's a real vote of confidence to know that people are interested in what you are doing.'

We're really excited about what we're doing here and believe it has the potential to bring some quality graduate jobs to Teesside.

Andrew Dunn, co-founder of StratoBooster

'We've had fantastic support throughout from the University, including from Launchpad and DigitalCity, and it was great to see so many from the University team there when we got the award.'

1

30cm rocket is carried 32km into atmosphere by balloon.

2

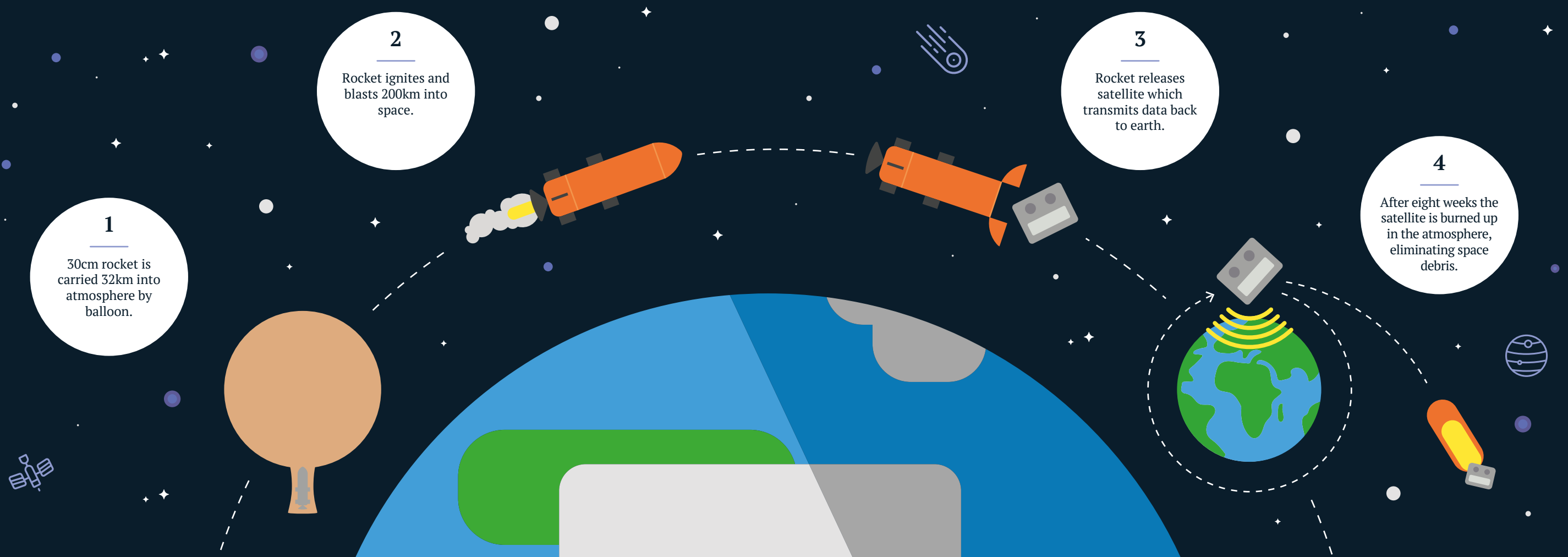
Rocket ignites and blasts 200km into space.

3

Rocket releases satellite which transmits data back to earth.

4

After eight weeks the satellite is burned up in the atmosphere, eliminating space debris.





# FLYING HIGH THANKS TO RESEARCH

Researchers at Teesside University are working alongside a world-leading electrical systems manufacturer to help develop the next generation of aircraft.

Safran Electrical & Power UK is working with the University's advanced manufacturing and process engineering research group to develop its plans for More Electric Aircraft (MEA).

In particular, the group, led by Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) Professor Simon Hodgson, has been commissioned to develop high-temperature electrical insulation technologies to be used across the Safran group's product range.

The Advanced Electric Machine Technologies for Aircraft (AEMTA) Research & Technology programme, part-funded by Innovate UK (UK Government) and established through the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) framework, was created to re-establish and further develop electric machine design capability at Safran Electrical & Power UK.

Explaining the rationale for the AEMTA programme, Naveed Sheikh, Safran Electrical & Power UK Research & Technology Programme Manager, says, "The increasing electrification of functions on board aircraft is a formative and irreversible change that will move faster and intensify with future programmes.

"Hydraulic and pneumatic power is gradually being replaced by electricity. This has many advantages, both in terms of safety and the environment. We wanted to develop technologies to facilitate MEA and establish a future UK supply chain for their commercial exploitation.

"Teesside University's role was to create novel technologies required to produce the high performance, robust and lightweight electrical machines used in the

MEA – particularly the electrical insulation materials which are one of the key performance limiting factors in these systems.

"We had problems where wire is used in high temperature, insulation would break down, and we needed enhanced capability in this technology. Professor Hodgson and his team successfully developed coatings to protect the wire and enabled it to perform at temperatures which met our needs."

Innovate UK and the ATI provided extremely positive feedback during the final dissemination event – citing AEMTA as a 'model project' with excellent collaboration, management and a very successful outcome. The partners were also complimented for having created an 'eco-system' for open and honest information exchange, generating orders between partners and an environment where leading-edge technologies have been produced for exploitation.

**"We set Teesside University the challenge of increasing the temperature range but they delivered so much more – their coatings are proven to be effective and we are now looking at how it performs in various machines," adds Naveed.**

"We went to Teesside knowing they worked within the aerospace sector on similar technologies. The University also developed a small-scale industrialisation process so that the insulation could be applied using conventional industrial methods, hence easing the way to industrialisation of the technology."

The partners are now exploring pathways to industrialisation, and the relationship with Safran Electrical & Power UK is set to continue as Professor Hodgson and his team are currently discussing further projects with other parts of the organisation around wire coating in high temperatures with health monitoring.



Pierre Soissons / Labinal Power Systems / Safran





# SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE

From helping to create new building products from waste to interpreting big data, businesses across the region are benefiting from working with Teesside University on Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs).

KTPs are a UK-wide programme that has been helping businesses for more than 40 years to improve competitiveness and productivity through better use of knowledge, technology and skills.

Part-funded by Innovate UK, KTPs typically last for two to three years and are a collaboration between a university and a company.

A graduate KTP associate is embedded within the company, working alongside an academic team from Teesside University to help the business meet a core strategic need and identify innovative solutions to help it grow.

Teesside University has an established track record of delivering highly successful KTPs which have made a tangible impact on the businesses involved.

Waste recycling experts Scott Bros turned to Teesside University for help to find a practical solution for utilising ‘filter cake’ – the unwanted residue from construction and excavation waste processed at the company’s wash plant near Stockton.

The research is already producing encouraging results in binding the material together to produce a commercial product for use in the brick manufacturing process, floor screeds and potentially ground improvement.

Peter Scott, a director of Scott Bros, says, ‘Scott Bros is proud to play an active role in keeping our precious resources in use for as long as possible. Our investment in the wash plant, together with the work we are carrying out with Teesside University, underlines our commitment to the circular economy.’

## Other KTPs underway at Teesside University;

Stockton healthcare-innovation company **2PD** is working with Teesside University to develop a sensory discrimination training device to help amputees who suffer from the potentially debilitating condition of phantom limb pain. The device can be self-administered, reducing the need for lengthy and costly sessions with medical professionals.

**Visualsoft**, a Stockton-based digital marketing agency, has appointed KTP associate Calvin Tan to assist in the construction of a ‘VS Analytics’ system which will collate and interpret big data from the Visualsoft platform and glean valuable insights into the eCommerce market for both the company and its clients.

**NYMAS** design and manufacture bathroom and toilet accessibility products for the trade, commercial, health and hospitality sectors. The Billingham-based company has embarked on a KTP to embed a bespoke New Product Development function using emerging concepts in “design thinking”, novel material applications and associated manufacturing methods, creating a portfolio of innovative and elegant accessibility bathroom products.



# NEW £5.6M ENTERPRISE ZONE TO BE CREATED

Teesside University’s Middlesbrough campus is to become a £5.6 million enterprise zone, providing a dynamic environment for new entrepreneurs and established companies to grow through digital innovation.

The University Enterprise Zone (UEZ) will build on the University’s established track record in helping tech start-ups, with the development of two enterprise hubs on its Middlesbrough campus.

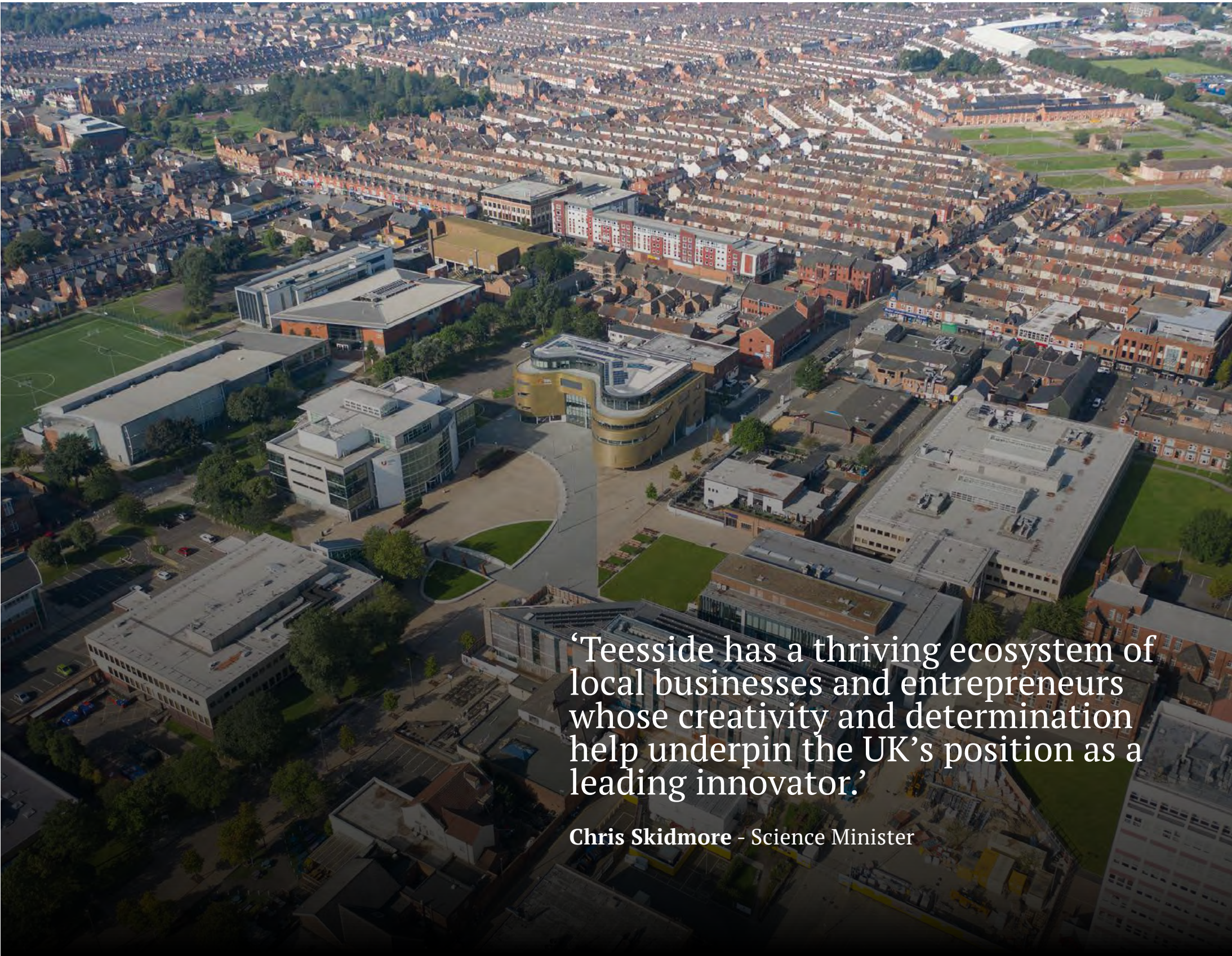
Underpinned by academic strengths in digital technologies and a focus on interdisciplinary working, the UEZ will be the driver for increased tech start-ups and productivity growth through digitalisation.

The UEZ is part-funded by a £1.485m capital grant from the Research England Development Fund, matched by the University, and leveraging in at least a further £2.6m over the next three years. Key partners and supporters include the Tees Valley Combined Authority, Middlesbrough Council and Tees Valley local authorities, Double Eleven, Visualsoft, Cubic, Amazing Interactives, R8 Games, the North East England Chamber of Commerce and MAKE UK.

Work for the UEZ will include re-purposing the existing Launchpad start-up centre and Phoenix Building to provide exciting and transformative incubation, collaboration and acceleration space on campus, including additional start-up and grow-on units, games studios, co-working and maker spaces and events facilities.

Ben Houchen, Tees Valley Mayor, says, “The Tees Valley is already home to world-class digital companies, many stem from graduates of the University. As we look to drive forward growth in this vital sector, we need to make sure we are providing the top-quality facilities businesses need to help them flourish.

‘Increasing the number of opportunities and suitable spaces for scale-up companies is key to the region’s economic growth.’



‘Teesside has a thriving ecosystem of local businesses and entrepreneurs whose creativity and determination help underpin the UK’s position as a leading innovator.’

Chris Skidmore - Science Minister



# NEW PLATFORM TO EMPOWER DISTANCE LEARNING

An innovative new learning platform specifically designed to facilitate the needs and ambitions of the modern student, including workplace learners, has been launched as part of Teesside University's ambitious digital transformation programme.

The University has partnered with global software provider D2L to offer a state-of-the art approach to online distance learning using its Brightspace platform.

The new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) has been developed in order to meet industry demand for flexible access to learning.

Teesside University Online Learning is offering three innovative online distance learning courses - BA (Hons) Business and Enterprise (Top-Up), MSc Cybersecurity and Teesside University Business School's flagship MBA course – with this number set to rise significantly over the coming months.

The platform can be accessed via a computer's internet browser or on a mobile device and offers students the opportunity to study their subjects in their own time through an easy-to-navigate interface.

As well as viewing course materials and study aids and accessing scheduled classes and seminars through the platform, students on online distance learning courses can also contact tutors through digital communication channels.

The platform aligns with Teesside University's Future Facing Learning strategy which has seen it embrace cutting-edge technology to change the way that students learn across the whole portfolio of academic courses.

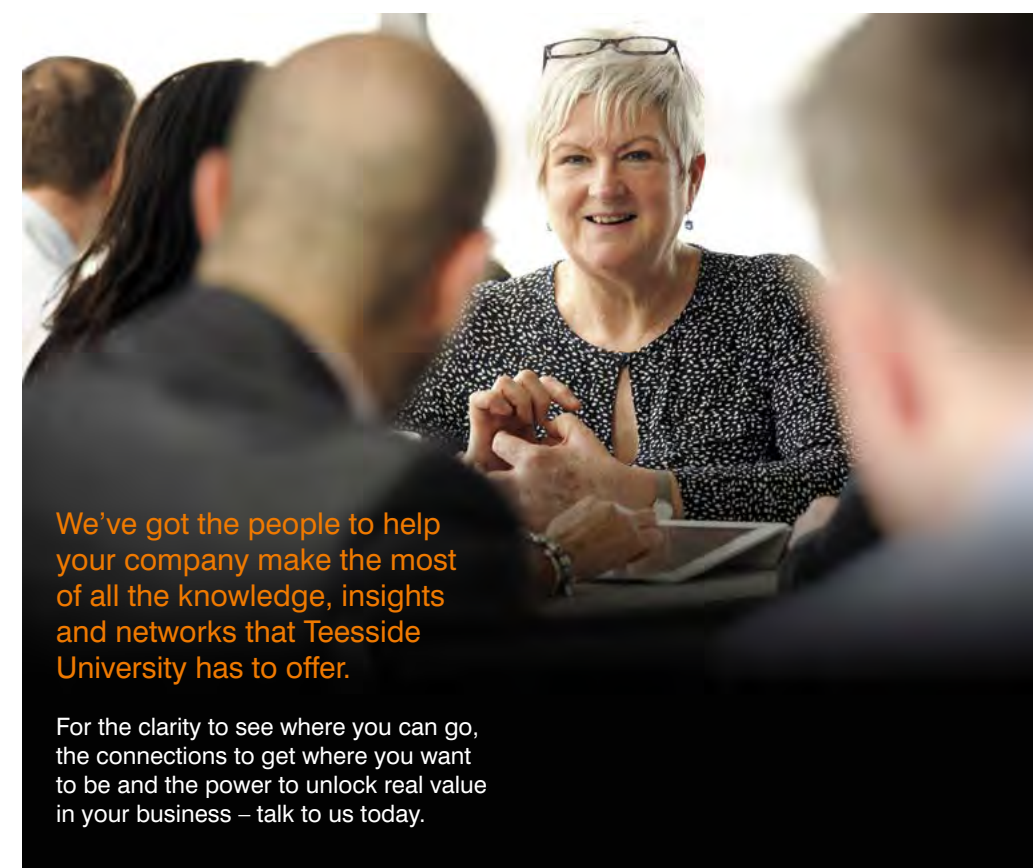
Professor Mark Simpson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), says, 'This new platform takes the strengths of our on-campus provision and widens it out to a whole new market, both nationally and internationally.

'Our online distance learning provides a flexible environment for students whether they are employees juggling the demands of the modern workplace, or part-time or mature learners who wish to study at their own pace.

**'The VLE experience means they can tailor their learning around their own needs without losing any of the quality of a traditional degree.'**



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