Foreword


Medway has so much to be proud of. It is home to some very significant businesses and talented people, and a unique partnership of universities at Chatham Maritime. Innovation Centre Medway is a very successful state-of-the-art incubator centre for start-up technology companies.

Medway Council and its partners want to build on this success so that Medway is recognised across the UK, and globally, as a centre for business innovation, high value employment and university-industry partnership.

Situated within the Kent Innovation Corridor, transport connections make Medway, and the Innovation Centre especially, a fantastic place to do business, within very easy reach of London as well as Europe.

I encourage you to read through this strategy, and to join us in making Medway a beacon for innovation.

Cllr Jane Chitty
Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth, Medway Council
Innovation in Medway

Innovation is not just about investment in research and development (R&D), but also new approaches to product, process and organizational innovation. A vital element of this is an ‘innovation management system’ which includes not only the company’s innovation processes from idea generation to innovation result, but also ‘leadership’, management skills, the capacity of the company to absorb and act on new ideas, and other enabling factors – like the ability to co-operate with third partners such as R&D partners, clients and suppliers.

For small businesses, innovation is rarely just the result of a technical invention or of new products sold on the market. It can equally be a new approach to market or a new combination of resources or processes within or outside the business. Engagement with the right type of companies, who possess not only the market potential but the right ‘mindset’ to grow through innovation, and their involvement with the ICM, is therefore critical.
Aim of the strategy

Medway Council and its partners aim to establish Medway as a centre of business innovation and high value employment, maximizing university-industry partnership.

Innovation Centre Medway (ICM) is at the heart of this strategy: it houses 55 high-tech start-up businesses and, located close to the M2/M20 axis, is one of a network of innovation centres and business parks across North and East Kent forming the Kent Innovation Corridor.

Medway Council and its partners aim to stimulate innovation, product and process development and technology transfer which will enhance growth, creativity, customer satisfaction and market share both nationally and internationally for all clients at ICM.

Activities and achievements to date:

- ICM is the only centre in the South East to hold a Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) Quality Mark

- A Head of Innovation Services, employed by the University of Greenwich, co-ordinates innovation support and champions innovation among the business community in the ICM and the wider business network

- The New Deal for Innovation project supports innovative activities in businesses by accessing the expertise of the University of Greenwich via a voucher scheme to help develop new business models, test products, manage supply chains, streamline processes and provide targeted training

- The University of Greenwich is a delivery partner for the Enterprise Europe Network, which provides a free service to help businesses find international business partners, source new technologies and receive EU funding or finance. The Network also provides advice on issues such as intellectual property, going international, or EU law and standards

- The University of Kent at Medway also provides support through its supply chain management and leadership programmes

There are three elements to the strategy:

- Developing networks and promoting the ICM – reaching out to innovator businesses and potential partners in Medway and beyond

- Selection and rental strategy – the basis on which companies are offered office space at the ICM and so become part of the ICM community

- Innovation support – how businesses are guided and supported through a structured innovation management programme that will see them grow, create more higher value jobs, and be able to attract investment

The expectation is that, as they grow, firms will move on from the ICM to larger business premises in Medway, so making room for the next generation of innovation companies at ICM.
Developing networks and promoting the ICM

An overall innovation marketing and communications plan will advertise innovation successes and develop networks and partnerships, including:

- Publicising the ICM in sector-based, regional and national publications and websites
- Improving awareness and understanding of, and accessibility to, the services that help businesses to innovate
- Working with Locate in Kent to market ICM outside Medway
- Attracting young entrepreneurs by promoting ICM through university and college Job Shops and encouraging take-up of My Desk space
- Regular workshops to identify and encourage supply chain opportunities for businesses in ICM with larger businesses in Medway, the South East, nationally and internationally
- Capitalising on the University of Greenwich’s leading role in Enterprise Europe Network and the collaboration with the Technology Strategy Board
- Collaborating with innovation centres within the Innovation Corridor, elsewhere in the UK and internationally
Selection

In assessing tenancy applications, Medway Council will give priority to those businesses that can demonstrate the following in their business plan:

- Financial projections and operational feasibility
- A product or service that is already at the commercialisation stage, or will be within the first year or so of tenancy.
- Market opportunity
- Economic impact (Gross Value Added)
- Job creation, training and workforce development
- Future collaboration
- The demonstration of commitment and willingness to accept guidance and participate in the centre’s support programme

Applicants will be required to attend a business planning workshop at ICM, and will be referred to a relevant partner business support offer.

A tenant business support agreement is at Appendix 1.

Rental policy

Tenants will be offered leases on flexible terms, but with the following conditions:

New tenants will be made aware that ICM is an incubator to establish businesses, over a period of three years, after which they will be ‘encouraged’ to move to commercial premises in order to maintain healthy churn. Businesses that remain after three years will be either:

1. Charged a premium of up to 10% above the market rate, or
2. Given reasonable notice (3-6 months) to find alternative accommodation.

Tenants will be encouraged to take full advantage of business support services and events provided at the Innovation Centre.

Meeting rooms will be provided free of charge for partners delivering Medway’s Business Innovation Support Programme, such as provision of masterclasses.
Business innovation support programme

The intention is to raise the aspirations of businesses already located, or considering locating, at ICM. The service will be targeted at SMEs whom we identify as those with the most innovation and growth potential. The business support programme will include the following:

- Awareness raising sessions, which may take the form of smaller master class type events with a thematic/sectoral focus, aimed at selected players such as larger business and midcaps

- Coaching/mentoring for key business life stages, especially at critical points of growth and change, adopting models of international good practice on growth mapping

- A series of events around Access to Finance and a consolidated ‘Finance for Innovation’ approach across Kent and Medway

- Developing the innovation vouchers scheme as a pathway to significantly enhanced levels of business-university collaboration and as an entry into government funded schemes such as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

- Providing regular awareness sessions on European Horizon 2020 funding, to explain the main priorities and opportunities, and facilitating access to new SME funding for ICM and Medway companies

- A programme of local student and graduate enterprise initiatives to encourage new business start-ups links between entrepreneurial students and Medway companies and enhanced levels of graduate retention in Medway.

Measuring Success

An audit of ICM tenant businesses will be carried out jointly by Medway Council and University of Greenwich every two years, to assess:

- The level and type of innovation being undertaken by ICM businesses
- Whether they have met or exceeded their business plan aspirations
- Whether the innovation services provided have been effective
- Measure of the overall increase in GVA at ICM
Innovation Centre Medway Tenant Business Support Agreement

1. DEFINITIONS
In this agreement:
"You" and "Your" each mean the tenant business.
"We", "Us" and "Our" each mean the Innovation Centre Medway Team, Maidstone Road, Chatham, MES 9FD, a collaboration between Medway Council Regeneration & Economic Development and University of Greenwich, Business & Enterprise.
Our Accountable Body is Medway Council.

2. AIM OF THIS AGREEMENT
We exist to help entrepreneurs create and grow successful businesses which generate wealth for the benefit of the region’s economy. We are especially interested in fostering technology and knowledge-based innovations and service propositions.
We believe that your idea has commercialisation potential, and intend to provide you with first-hand support and access to essential third party services. We classify you as a “High Growth Business” for this purpose. Before we do this, both we and you need to be clear about the basis on which we are acting, and the nature of our mutual obligations.

3. YOUR INTENTIONS
By entering into this agreement you confirm the following:

a) You are seeking to commercialise an innovation or business proposition;
b) You believe that you have a potential market which is at least regional, and preferably national (it may also be international);
c) You are committed to growing your business;
d) You are open to advice, networking and collaboration, and prepared to share your thoughts and experiences with like-minded peers;
e) You are authorised by your shareholders and/or partners to enter into this undertaking with us.

4. OUR OFFER TO YOU
We intend to provide you with the following support:

a) A one-to-one relationship with a member of our Innovation Centre Medway Team, to help you realise your growth aspirations through the creation and execution of a business plan;
b) Access to free business advisors, workshops, Masterclasses and business networking;
c) Access to support services (“Providers”) you need to commercialise your ideas. These may include experts in business, finance, technology, investment preparation, IP strategy, market analysis and research, business mentors, the knowledge and expertise of our partners; We intend to provide you with the following support:
d) High quality flexible workspace to enable your business to become sustainable to migrate to the commercial market.
f) To monitor your progress and calculate Gross Value Added (GVA) to be benchmarked against regional and national figures;
g) Introductions to local networks of potential customers, suppliers and collaborators, as applicable;
h) To attend a minimum of 3 business Masterclasses per annum;
i) To keep us up to date with the development of your business, providing us with data required to calculate GVA.

6. THE TERMS OF OUR OFFER
In order to ensure we are able to offer an effective service to our Tenants, we draw your attention to the following conditions which apply to our agreement with you:

a) Nature of our advice: You understand that any advice and assistance we provide is given on an informal basis and that we do not offer financial, legal or investment advice;
b) No liability: The decision on whether to accept or follow any advice offered by us or by our Providers is solely yours. Therefore, you agree that we shall not be liable for direct, indirect or consequential loss you may suffer, and that you shall have no redress against us, our Accountable Body or our Providers arising from any advice we provide (or fail to provide) or actions you may or may not take based on our advice;
c) Duration: This agreement is for a three-year period for reporting purposes only. We and you will review the effectiveness and appropriateness of our intensive support for you at six-monthly intervals;
d) Charges: Regular meetings with a member of the ICM Team, and their time in assisting with the preparation of business and action plans, is provided free of charge. Initial meetings with Providers will also be free of charge, unless otherwise advised. The responsibility for commissioning and paying for subsequent work from any Providers rests with you;
e) Payments: We want all of our Providers to interact with our Tenants promptly and with confidence. You therefore agree to make any payments which may become due to them in strict accordance with their terms;
f) Confidentiality: Your business ideas are valuable to you. Any confidential or sensitive information or opinion you disclose to us, and which is not in the public domain, will be treated by us as confidential. Notwithstanding the above, we may share such information with members of the ICM Team, in order to provide you with the best advice we can, under the same confidentiality obligation. Also, if we facilitate access to Providers for you, you agree that we may disclose sufficient general information to them in advance of any meeting, for us to establish whether a particular Provider will be able to deliver the assistance you need;
g) Reporting: You agree that we may collect information about your business for ourselves and for regional & national reporting, auditing and administrative purposes. If we pass this information to anyone else, we will ensure it is first made anonymous;
h) No endorsement: We are happy for you to tell clients and associates about your involvement with us. However, you may not present this as an endorsement or form of certification without our prior written consent.

Signed:..........................................................................                         Date:..........................................................................

Authorised company signature

Signed:..........................................................................                         Date:..........................................................................

Innovation Centre Medway

Appendix 1 - Terms of Agreement