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Innovation Centre looks ahead to year of major advances

INNOVATION centres in Luton and Cambridge are celebrating their success in obtaining funding for CLIP (The Cambridge Luton Innovation Project).

Luton and Dunstable Innovation Centre, based in Adelaide Street, Luton, will be collaborating with St John's Innovation Centre in Cambridge to identify projects and activities which can assist with the incubation of new knowledge based businesses in Luton.

The projects will also be a valuable means of bringing the resources of Luton to the attention of expanding industries in Cambridge and the surrounding region.

Mike Anstey, manager of the Luton centre, said: "We are delighted to be working with friends and colleagues in Cambridge. St John's is one of the oldest and most suc-

cessful of the UK Innovation Centres and has a wealth of experience and expertise which will be invaluable in the continuing development and expansion of the Luton centre.

"Equally CLIP will present a range of opportunities to promote the locational, manufacturing and other resources of Luton in Cambridge and throughout the Eastern Region.

Walter Herriott, managing director of the St John's centre, said the initiative was an excellent example of collaboration and would be of benefit to both Cambridge and Luton economies.

The project starts early in 2002 and will involve a range of individuals and organisations in the build-up to pilot projects later in the year.

A briefing paper issued by Luton centre says the project will establish important innovation transfer mechanisms

between the two communities and it is anticipated that it will provide valuable guidelines for co-operation between innovation centres across the Eastern Region.

St John's Innovation Centre was established 13 years ago and has a highly respected track record in supporting innovative companies. It has also had an important role in the success of the adjacent Cambridge Science Park.

Luton and Dunstable Innovation Centre was set up two years ago in a former church and is a leading player in an ambitious plan to develop a purpose built innovation centre and technology village at Butterfield Green, close to Luton airport.

The proposed centre and technology village are envisaged as a focal point for attracting innovative industry into the town as part of its wider regeneration plans.

Cambridge and Luton are

very different areas with distinctive infrastructures and resources.

But while planners here have an urgent need to provide alternative employment of many kinds following the closure of the Vauxhall car plant they are also looking at the possibility that Cambridge's success in gearing innovation to its economic prosperity may hold pointers to wealth creation policies that can be applied in Luton.

Early stage action next year will include comparisons of the two business communities and innovation centres, analysis of transferable processes and mechanisms, and drafting of pilot collaborative projects that could be run by the centres.

A six month interim report and recommendations will be circulated prior to a conference of all contributors.

Wireless technologies, flexible working, e-envoys in futuristic talks programme

THE Luton & Dunstable Innovation Centre has launched its fourth events programme looking at new ways of working in an information society.

A November presentation by the Telework Association will be followed in January by a talk on wireless technologies. This is the programme:

January 30

The future of communications for business organisations: wireless technologies' Lucent Technologies and KnowWare UK Ltd

Speakers: Bryan Hall (Wireless Product Manager - Lucent Technologies) and Mike Baker (Sales Manager - KnowWare UK Ltd)

The speakers will discuss all aspects of wireless technology, including security issues, the standards and what the future holds. Particular attention will be paid to the advantages over structured cabling, specifically

with a business organisation and client companies in mind.

February 27

'Managing flexible work methods' Henley Management College - Future Work Forum

Speaker: Peter Thomson (Director of the Future Work Forum)

The Future Work Forum was established in 1992 as a focal point for people interested in remote and flexible working methods. Peter will discuss how the Forum supports and encourages the organisational, managerial and social changes enabled by new working practices. Particular focus will be given to how managers of SMEs can effectively remote work with employees.

March 27

'What can IT do for my business?' Small Business Service - UK Online

Speaker: Keith Padbury (UK Online for Business Centre Manager)

Keith heads the UK Online initiative in Bedfordshire offered through the Small Business Service. He will be explaining the relevance of the initiative to people establishing or running a small business. Focus will be given to the application of IT to new ways of working. Other forms of help, funding and assistance will also be discussed.

April 24

Office of the e-Envoy

The Office of the e-Envoy is leading the drive to get the UK online, to ensure that the country, its citizens and its businesses derive maximum benefit from the knowledge economy. An official from the Office of the e-Envoy will be attending to explain Government policy and initiatives on the promotion and use of IT in busi-

ness. Particular focus will be given to small businesses and new ways of working.

May 29

NTL

NTL are the major local telecommunications and internet service provider over the Luton Cable Network. They are planning the use of Broadband within the home office and small office (SOHO) environment. The speaker will be talking about the exciting and innovative range of new services available to the small business market. Special reference will be given to remote working and teleworking.

All events take place at The Spires, 2 Adelaide Street, Luton, Beds. The events are free of charge and anyone is welcome to attend. For booking and further information please contact Sarah Leeming on sarah.leeming@luton.ac.uk or 01582 743702.