

£15m research hub will attract global investment

by TONY McDONOUGH

Business Reporter

@tonymc39

LIVERPOOL will become the global research and innovation centre for the “internet of things” following the announcement of a £15m collaboration between two of the city’s universities.

Sensor City is a project being set up by the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU).

It will house and support new high-tech businesses around “sensor technologies”.

Sensors are the crucial link between technological devices and the world around them, capturing data on a whole host of areas such as temperature, humidity and pressure.

They can be used in everything from home security systems to medical technology and high-value manufacturing.

Sensors will also be used in clothing to give doctors accurate snapshots of the physical conditions of patients.

**The so-called “internet of things” is being seen as the next big revolution in online technology – and Liverpool will now lead the world in its development.**

Yesterday, Chancellor George Osborne visited the University of Liverpool to announce £5m of Government funding for the project which will see the UK’s first University Enterprise Zone being established.

It represented the first building blocks of Mr Osborne’s “Northern powerhouse” and he also unveiled a package of transport infrastructure projects for the Liverpool city region worth more than £34m.

Mr Osborne told the ECHO: “The stuff being developed here is absolutely cutting edge.

It is better than anything else happening anywhere in the world.

“We are all going to use the technologies being developed here and we are going to be able to say they were made in Liverpool.”

# OSBORNE PRAISE FOR SENSOR CITY

WELCOME: George Osborne arrives at the University of Liverpool Department of Electrical Engineering and Electronics



DEMONSTRATION: The Chancellor chats to Dr Munira Raja

Sensor City will help inventions go from the lab to the factory floor even faster, and act as a shop window for foreign investment into Merseyside’s high tech start-ups.

University of Liverpool vice-chancellor Sir Howard Newby said he was thrilled the universities were going to establish the first University Enterprise Zone fighting off “stiff competition” from other locations across the UK.

He added: “Only four of these are

being designated nationally – it is a great feather in the cap for the city.

“It is not just about the universities it is about the continuing development of the knowledge economy in Liverpool.

**“We are world leaders in sensor technology because of our work on the Hadron Collider in Switzerland.**

“The sensors on the end of that are built and designed in Liverpool. They take a trillion images per second of the particles colliding.”

Mr Osborne also unveiled a package of measures to improve the transport infrastructure across Merseyside and Cheshire as part of the Atlantic Gateway project.

He is allocating £10.4m to upgrade the Halton Curve, improving connectivity between Liverpool, Cheshire, Warrington and North Wales and also offered £4m of improvements to the A5300 Knowsley Expressway to maximise the benefits of the new Mersey crossing and access to Liverpool John Lennon Airport

The package also contains £5.6m to improve access and road safety around Knowsley Industrial Park and a £14.4m upgrade of the car parking and public transport connections on the Newton-le-Willows rail interchange link to Parkside.

Mr Osborne added: “I said I wanted to create a Northern power-

house. You can link great cities like Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds together and create a real economic powerhouse.

“To do that you need better transport links and we are starting that right now.”

**The transport improvements were welcomed by Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA) as they claim it will become much easier for people to get to and from Speke.**

A spokesman for LJLA told the ECHO: “It opens up Cheshire and North Wales and makes the journey to and from the airport much easier. We have been lobbying for this for 10 years.”

● ECHO Business: Page 16

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR BUSINESS 2014

## IFB to return to city in 2016

LIVERPOOL Mayor Joe Anderson yesterday welcomed Government backing for the return of the International Festival for Business (IFB) to the city in 2016.

Mr Anderson hailed this year’s 50-day extravaganza a great success and said Merseyside had provided a “wonderful platform” to showcase the best of British industry to thousands of visitors from more than 70 countries.

Chancellor George Osborne announced the support for the return of the IFB to Liverpool in two years’ time at the Santander SME summit at the Cunard Building.

Mr Osborne said: “When I travel round the world meeting foreign governments and investors I am selling Britain as a brand and

events like this IFB make that job easier.

“It’s a shop window for global markets and a reminder that we can be proud of the stamp that reads ‘Made in Britain’.

“So today I am backing this initiative, committing the funding requested by the Mayor of Liverpool Joe Anderson and Liverpool City Council for another festival here in Liverpool in 2016.

“I will work with all of you here to put on an event that is even bigger and even better in two years’ time, so we can continue to put Britain, this great city of Liverpool and our inspirational small businesses out in the front.”

Mayor Anderson added: “As we reach the half way

stage of what has already been an inspiring and diverse programme of superb business events, I am delighted that its impact has been seen by Government and that they have chosen Liverpool to reprise the international festival for business in 2016.

“A country like the UK that is looking to increase its exports should be regularly holding an event like this. It is truly a reflection of how far the city has come, the extent of our ambition and the fact that Liverpool is open for business.

“This year’s festival has been no mean feat and my team at Liverpool Vision have risen to the challenge and I know we have the expertise to do it again.”

● Voice of the ECHO: P10



SUCCESS: Joe Anderson at the launch of the IFB

## Silver screen’s future dream

LEADING talent from across the global film and creative industries will gather in Liverpool at Dream Factory, one of the highlight events of the International Festival for Business (IFB) 2014, taking place on July 14-15.

The event will provide a platform for the high calibre of home-grown talent to aid and inspire the creative and film professionals of the future.

Dream Factory will focus on the entirety of the creative process – from the conception, fundraising, making and selling, to the marketing, promotion and

distribution of films.

It will be presented by the masters of the international film industry responsible for blockbuster movies such as Gangs of New York, Paranormal Activity, W/E, Get Carter, Welcome To The Punch, Locke, The Sweeney and A Single Man.

Stuart Ford, curator, Dream Factory and founder and chief executive of IM Global, said: “The Dream Factory promises to be a vibrant, informative and richly entertaining two-day immersion into the best of British and international cinema.”