

The role of Public Private Partnerships under the European Spotlight



Professor Michael Parkinson and Ron Rees of Sheffield City Council visiting the city's retail quarter

The role of Public Private Partnerships (PPP's) in Competitive European city regions was placed under the spotlight in Sheffield recently when almost seventy people, representing seven European partner cities, the English Core Cities, Sheffield City Region and of course the Knowledge network, met for a two day showcasing event as part of the Interreg 3C funded Compete Project.

The event, which was chaired by Professor Michael Parkinson of the European Institute for Urban Affairs at Liverpool John Moore's University, featured a range of high profile speakers from across the UK and Europe including Councillor Jan Wilson, Leader and Sir Robert Kerslake, Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council, Philip Cox, Head of the ODPM/DTI Regional Economic Performance Team, Dr Hichem Trache of the University of Nottingham, Monica Madrigal of Barcelona and John Ansbro, Chief Executive of the Leeds Financial Services Initiative. Manchester City Council's Chief Executive, Sir Howard Bernstein also gave a presentation on the role PPP's played in re-building Manchester after the IRA bombing in 1996.

In addition to being given a variety of presentations on PPP's, delegates participated in a number of site visits and workshops, including a visit to the award-

winning Kier Sheffield Partnership, the Cultural Industries Quarter, the retail quarter and Europe's newest airport Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield. Discussions centred upon the requirement for early private sector involvement, clear leadership and the fitness for purpose of the structure or type of PPP's,

The event was organised as part of the Compete project, which runs until the end of September 2007 and is hosted by Sheffield City Council on behalf of the English Core Cities. It is aimed at sharing best practice on making city regions competitive working with six other European City regions - Lyon, Barcelona, Helsinki, Munich, Dortmund and Rotterdam.

Future project activities will include events in each of the European partner cities commencing with the next event being held in Dortmund from the 28th - 30th September 2005 on managing human

capital in competitive European city regions, as well as the development of a Knowledge Resource Centre where information and best practice will be shared. Access to the Knowledge Resource Centre will be free of charge to access and should be established by the early summer 2005 at www.sheffield.gov.uk/compete

For further information on the Compete Project and/or future events contact Victoria Henshaw, Compete Project Manager on: 0114 2736781 or e-mail victoria.henshaw@sheffield.gov.uk

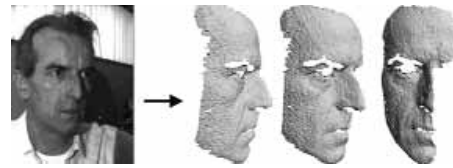


Image acquisition project leads to yorkshire CONCEPT success

A collaborative project between Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Bradford, which looks at 3D acquisition, image registration and curvature analysis, has been successful in gaining an award of £70,000 in the first round of the yorkshire CONCEPT proof of concept fund.

The project is led by Professor Marcos Rodrigues and it aims to investigate methods for fast 3D facial acquisition and recognition, with a particular focus on developing the commercial viability of these technologies. Other potential applications exist in the medical, transport and industrial sectors.

Professor Rodrigues believes there are clear commercial opportunities for a fast, accurate and robust system capable of identifying and comparing key facial parameters, especially concerning biometrics for security applications. He believes the yorkshire CONCEPT funding offers an ideal opportunity for the development of this work, "We developed and patented enabling technologies for 3D facial recognition, and needed investment for



Fast area scan with single shot technology: 3D face model from single video frame. These models, acquired in 40 milliseconds with our patented technologies, are used for image registration and face recognition methods.

commercial development. The funding from yorkshire CONCEPT will allow us to exploit current IP and tackle the remaining technical issues concerning systems integration".

A total of 5 awards were made in the first round of yorkshire CONCEPT which is a joint pilot scheme between Sheffield Hallam and the universities of Hull and Bradford. The scheme is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and aims to support the development of projects that can demonstrate protectable intellectual property and commercial potential. There are three further funding rounds in 2005. More information about yorkshire CONCEPT is available at www.yorkshireconcept.com

Further information on the 3D acquisition project is available from Professor Marcos Rodrigues, email: m.rodrigues@shu.ac.uk or visit www.3DImagingTechnologies.co.uk or www.shu.ac.uk/meri/gmpr for more information.

BUILDING ON A VISION: ONE SHEFFIELD HALLAM CHALLENGER LOOKS TO THE FUTURE



Nik receives his prize from Sheffield Hallam University Chancellor, Professor the Lord Winston, in the Enterprise Challenge 2004 competition.

Sheffield Hallam graduate, Nik Hewitt, entered last year's Enterprise Challenge competition with an idea to develop his own business offering 3D architectural visualisations to the property development sector. His belief in his idea and his

determination to succeed paid off and at the Enterprise and Innovation awards dinner in October 2004 Nik was awarded prizes totalling £9,000 to help get his business off the ground.

Six months on Nik's vision for his company is a reality and his business is going from strength to strength. Now based in Sheffield Technology Parks, 4VisionStudios has begun to establish long term working relationships within a variety of sectors ranging from construction to landscaping to marketing and design. Nik is working on building up a client base which covers the UK and Dubai and has been able to offer efficient and effective services which utilise the latest e-business and project management technologies in their delivery.

One particular project success was in partnership with a design agency working on a holiday home development on the Scottish borders. The project involved the rendering and animation of luxury log cabins and a unique request to render a mermaid for a marketing campaign.

Outside the UK, the company has worked extensively with a variety of architectural clients. One project for an equestrian development, called The Plantations, in Dubai required renderings including a polo club, a riding school and several distinctive villas.

Nik is concentrating on looking to the future and hopes to eventually expand his business into several new markets. He is clearly keen to succeed and has a host of longer term ambitions in his sights, "If all goes to plan we hope to be establishing a Middle Eastern office sometime in the future, and I'll be spending all my time between clients in the UK and Dubai!"

For more information on 4Vision Studios visit www.4visionstudios.com or see www.shu.ac.uk/enterprise/challenge for more details about the Enterprise Challenge competition.



An example of 4Vision's unique architectural renderings.

Smart Ski Research at the University of Sheffield



Graham Bell at the Race Test Facility at Laterns

Research carried out by Dr Peter Styring and Dr Alex Routh in Chemical and Process Engineering at the University of Sheffield has led to a number of patents being filed on new ski and snowboard technology.

The novel waxing system has led to increases in speeds on both artificial surfaces and snow. After initial testing carried out on plastic at Sheffield Ski Village and artificial snow at Xscape Castleford, the technology was used in real conditions in the Austrian Alps.

Alex and Peter visited the Head Ski Race Department in Kennelbach and transferred the technology to their downhill race skis. Graham Bell, the former GB Olympian and current BBC television presenter skied on the modified skis and recorded times over super-G and glide courses at the race test facility at Laterns.



Graham Bell and Dr Peter Styring holding the modified Skis

The results showed that there is a temperature dependence of the waxing system but that certain formulations could improve the speed of the skis even at temperatures down to -16 °C. We hope that this will mark the start of a fruitful collaboration with Head.

More amazing was the increase in speeds experienced on plastic slopes where

improvements of up to 50% were recorded in tests carried out to validate the system by Snowsport England. It is hoped that the technology can be used in some of the artificial races over the coming summer season.

Not only does this new technology increase speed, it also helps to protect the skis' bases from abrasion and should therefore have a considerable impact on the recreational ski industry.

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD'S PROOF OF CONCEPT FUND

Two rounds of projects have now been funded from the University's Proof of Concept Fund. This programme, supported by the HEFCE's Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) and administered by the University's Office of Corporate Partnerships, provides small grants (c. £10-15K) to academic areas with early stage commercial opportunities. It enables them to explore the commercial potential of ideas which have arisen from their research, by supporting technical feasibility studies, testing, prototype development, market research, business plan development and the short term retention of research staff for these purposes. In order to apply for Proof of Concept funding, the project must be logged within the University's Commercial Assessment System (CAS).

From a total of 25 Proof of Concept applications, 20 projects have been awarded funding with a total value to date of £177K. Of these 20 projects, 5 are for Life Sciences applications, 2 for IT and Digital and 13 across the Engineering departments and the Polymer Centre. As these projects progress information will be provided for a later edition of the newsletter. Updates can be obtained from the relevant Business Exploitation Manager in SUEL.

A further call for projects is expected to be made in June 2005.

Further details on the scheme and application process can be found at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ocp.funding/internal/poc.html>.

The above companies have been spun-out by Sheffield University Enterprise Ltd (SUEL) which is the University of Sheffield's wholly owned Technology Transfer Company dealing with intellectual property and commercial exploitation.

For further information about SUEL either contact David Catton, Managing Director on 0114 222 1008 or visit the website www.suel.co.uk and contact one of the Business Exploitation Managers



GLASGOW PROFESSOR OF CITY TRANSFORMATION EMPLOYED TO DRIVE SHEFFIELD FORWARD

Sheffield's determination to move from revival to transformation has been further signalled by appointing Stuart Gulliver, a key figure in Glasgow's renaissance, as Interim Chief Executive of Creative Sheffield. Stuart will be drawing on his experience in turning Glasgow around to establish this new agency to drive forward Sheffield's economic strategy and help it become a city of European significance.

Stuart Gulliver began his six-month appointment on Monday 11th April, and has previously been heavily involved in Glasgow's reinvention for more than 15 years, helping change the negative attitudes and perceptions of the city. While there, Glasgow won European City of Culture in 1990. His two previous roles include five years as Glasgow University's Professor of City Development and ten years as Chief Executive of Glasgow Development Agency.

Stuart, who was born in Sheffield, will be responsible for developing and establishing the role of the city's economic driver, Creative Sheffield, working closely with Sheffield First Partnership; Sir Robert Kerslake, Chief Executive Sheffield City Council; and Yorkshire Forward.

Creative Sheffield has been initiated by Sheffield First Partnership to develop an economic "masterplan" for the city, focusing on a set of key initiatives that will endow the city with a strong and sustainable economy. This plan includes developing our skills base, promoting and harnessing our cultural and sporting assets,

promoting the city externally and securing inward investment.

Stuart has said of his recent appointment "I have an immense fondness for Sheffield and have followed its fortunes from afar. Not only is it great to be back in my hometown after living so long elsewhere, but I am also genuinely thrilled to be in a position which gives me the opportunity to help improve the performance of the city.

"Sheffield has now given clear notice that it wants to be considered a serious player on the European and world stages – my job is to help identify how it should do that."

Stuart Gulliver, now working for Sheffield City Council, has worked in the highest level of regeneration since 1987 and is also a member of Yorkshire Forward's Urban Renaissance Panel. His involvement and background in city economic development will be invaluable in assessing and developing Sheffield's economic focus within the forthcoming City Strategy 2005-2010.

Nick Rousseau, Acting Director of Sheffield First Partnership commented on the opportunity that Stuart Gulliver's appointment represents for Sheffield: "We are delighted with Stuart's appointment. His has already started to share some of his experiences in working with Glasgow, where the external perception of the city has clearly changed radically, partly as a result of working well with its creative and cultural communities. I am looking forward to working closely with him on our economic and cultural strategies."

Intelligent Regeneration

Since 2000 the CIQ Agency has steered the regeneration of Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ), working closely with its partners Sheffield City Council and Sheffield First Partnership – the local strategic partnership.

The CIQ is the principal geographical and economic cluster in the Creative and Digital Industries (CDI) sector in South Yorkshire and is acknowledged internationally as a leading centre for Cultural, Creative and Digital production.

Sheffield's CIQ and adjoining areas have continued to experience renewal as a result of commercial activity, planned developments and business investment. Over the last 12 months the pace of activity has accelerated across the four key communities of interest: learning, business, cultural and residential. Private and public Investment will exceed £80 million over the coming 12 months.

In April, the CIQ Agency's review of regeneration for 2005 ('Regen Month') profiled the strategic and economic opportunities flowing from current levels of CDI activity. The annual review complements the Agency's monthly 'First Thursday' networking meetings and profiled the success and significance of the CDI /CIQ Cluster to the Northern Way, Regional Economic Strategy, South Yorkshire Investment Plan and national debate about City Regions.

Since the 2004 review activity has accelerated with the start of the renewal process for Park Hill Flats; key projects such as the e-Campus, improvements to Sheffield Station and Sheaf Square taking off, Sheffield Technology Park's transformation into the region's main CDI focused business incubator, Sheffield Hallam University's emerging city-centre campus development and the opening of its new Student Union building, HUBS. This has been complemented by the establishment of Digital South Yorkshire (d-SY) as the sector membership and networking body.

The next twelve months will see the launch of key CIQ/CDI strategic programmes: The 'Creative Exchange:South Yorkshire' programme is aimed at developing a network of creative enterprise centres, exchange projects and support programmes which directly link the CDI sector to bespoke and specialised community based business support and training opportunities. 'The Street' project will work with many of the companies and cultural organisations based in the CIQ to develop a single access point offering an integrated and seamless range of services through an innovative web and new physical portal to the Quarter.

The pace of physical regeneration will continue with the clearance of several unattractive local landmarks (Dyson and Sheaf House), the creation of The Hub at the e-Campus, the completion of the Heart of the City works to renew Sheaf Square and improve Sheffield Station, the Quarter's first pilot live/work and shared ownership housing scheme (the Cube), with specialist move on business space for expanding CDI companies and the launch of the Freeman College by Ruskin Mill Education Trust.

The growth of Quarter's residential community continues to gather pace and diversity with a further 150 plus apartments being developed for sale and rent, all of which will be broadband enabled. Plans for the refurbishment of the grade II* listed Butcher Works will significantly add to the area's residential offer while Derwent Living's commitment to the Quarter continues with a new mixed use business and residential complex (Columbia Place).

For more information contact Richard Motley on 0114 275 2638 or email Richard.motley@ciq.org.uk

www.ciq.org.uk



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Sheffield Hallam University

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