

# FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Cutting-edge training centre welcomes Fenland District Council**

A group of councillors and staff from Fenland District Council toured a cutting-edge training centre in Chatteris to see first-hand how it is helping to upskill people of all ages – and act as a catalyst for the future economic success of Fenland and beyond.

The Council's Cabinet member for Education and Skills Cllr Chris Seaton, Chief Executive Paul Medd and Assistant Director responsible for Economic Growth Anna Goodall, visited the state-of-the-art North Cambridgeshire Training Centre (NCTC) on Monday (13 March).

Managed and operated by leading apprenticeship provider West Suffolk College, the centre was built within the Stainless Metalcraft site with the help of a £3.16m grant from the Combined Authority Business Board's Local Growth Fund, and opened last November.

A further £36,179 was provided by the Combined Authority through Fenland District Council's Growing Fenland Chatteris Masterplan, to provide ICT equipment and software to help support local skills development.

During the tour, visitors were shown the centre's workshop areas featuring lathes, welding stations and other high-tech machinery, as well as flexible tuition rooms and ICT suites.

They heard how the centre is not only filling a gap in the high-quality engineering and advanced manufacturing training offer in North Cambridgeshire, but it is also the first phase of a much wider vision by Stainless Metalcraft to develop an Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Park in the town.

Martin Lawrence, Commercial Director at Metalcraft, said: "The engineering sector is evolving quickly and requires a wide range of technical skills. We're delighted that Metalcraft's apprentices are among some of the first to benefit from access to the state-of-the-art facilities at the North Cambs Training Centre and excited by the potential it holds to help young people across the Fenland area into rewarding, long-term careers in the sector."

Following the tour, Cllr Seaton said: "It was fantastic to look around this impressive new centre which not only provides facilities and training not available elsewhere in Fenland but are among the best in the East of England. It will be able to respond to the skills needs of the local economy, raise local people's aspirations and set them on the path to a great career, develop new talent and increase wage levels too.

"With proposals to develop an innovation launchpad around the centre in the coming years, it also acts as a catalyst to drive forward significant economic growth in the area.

"The facility is testament to the close partnership working between Fenland District Council, Metalcraft, West Suffolk College and the Combined Authority, and I look forward to this collaboration continuing to help meet the needs of local people and businesses in future."

Deborah Barton, Principal for the Personal and Professional Learning programmes at West Suffolk College, added: “We are delighted to be part of an ongoing project that is supporting people of all ages gain new skills in Cambridgeshire.

“It is a privilege to be able to support job opportunities and local businesses – whilst helping boost the economy of this region and beyond - thanks to this partnership.

“We’d like to thank Fenland District Council for taking the time to come and for their ongoing guidance and support.”

The two-storey centre specialises in engineering and advanced manufacturing apprenticeships, with a special focus on future skills training including robotics, automation and composite materials manufacturing.

In addition, it also offers a range of commercial training and professional development courses which are ideal for individuals who are looking to develop their skills, improve their job prospects or retrain for a new career.

The centre can also develop bespoke training programmes to help businesses upskill their new or existing workforce and holds a range of special events to encourage schoolchildren and their parents, and the local community, to find out more about various career and apprenticeship pathways.

- For more information about what is on offer at NCTC, including courses and opportunities for employers, visit: [www.wsc.ac.uk/north-cambridgeshire-training-centre](http://www.wsc.ac.uk/north-cambridgeshire-training-centre)

## ENDS

### Photo captions:

**IMG\_6362:** Taking a look at one of the centre’s welding stations are, from left, Martin Johnson, Business Performance Director at Metalcraft; Anna Goodall, Assistant Director responsible for Economic Growth at Fenland District Council; Paul Medd, Chief Executive of Fenland District Council; Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council’s Cabinet member for Education and Skills; Martin Lawrence, Commercial Director at Metalcraft; Deborah Barton, Principal for the Personal and Professional Learning programmes at West Suffolk College; and Louise Unwin, Head of the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre.

**IMG\_6363:** From left, Anna Goodall, Assistant Director responsible for Economic Growth at Fenland District Council; Paul Medd, Chief Executive of Fenland District Council; Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council’s Cabinet member for Education and Skills; Martin Lawrence, Commercial Director at Metalcraft; Martin Johnson, Business Performance Director at Metalcraft; Deborah Barton, Principal for the Personal and Professional Learning programmes at West Suffolk College; and Louise Unwin, Head of the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre.

**IMG\_6364:** Louise Unwin, Head of the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre, shows Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council’s Cabinet member for Education and Skills; a milling machine at the centre.

**IMG\_6365:** Taking a look at one of the centre’s ICT suites are, from left, Louise Unwin, Head of the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre; Martin Lawrence, Commercial Director at Metalcraft; Martin Johnson, Business Performance Director at Metalcraft; Cllr Chris Seaton,

Fenland District Council's Cabinet member for Education and Skills; Deborah Barton, Principal for the Personal and Professional Learning programmes at West Suffolk College; Paul Medd, Chief Executive of Fenland District Council; and Anna Goodall, Assistant Director responsible for Economic Growth at Fenland District Council.

**IMG\_6367:** Pictured during the NCTC tour are, from left, Martin Lawrence, Commercial Director at Metalcraft; Louise Unwin, Head of the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre; Anna Goodall, Assistant Director responsible for Economic Growth at Fenland District Council; Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council's Cabinet member for Education and Skills; Paul Medd, Chief Executive of Fenland District Council; and Martin Johnson, Business Performance Director at Metalcraft.

### Notes to Editors

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: [communications@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:communications@fenland.gov.uk)

