

HIGH-SPEED IS KEY AT HATTON PARK

By Jenny Waddington
BUSINESS EDITOR

A WARWICKSHIRE business park has revealed it is poised to sign three new deals - thanks in part to bucking the national trend in regards to superfast broadband.

Hatton Technology Park has announced this week it is in advanced talks with a trio of businesses looking to locate to the site due to its technological link-up - despite its countryside location.

This comes just days after a report from the National Audit Office, claimed that plans to make superfast broadband available to 90 per cent of premises in rural parts of the UK is almost two years behind schedule. The new findings suggest the programme will complete its rollout 22 months later than planned.

Bosses at Hatton Technology Park say the importance of superfast broadband shouldn't be underestimated after attracting new commercial tenants for who high-speed internet connectivity proved to be a deal maker.

"We are in advanced talks with three businesses looking to locate here," said Caroline Clifton, property manager for Hatton Estates - which runs the Technology Park.

"The latest deal is a big company which is locating here because not only is it a lovely place to work, but more importantly, because it has the superfast connection which will help it to remain competitive in a global market.

"Other businesses on the estate have either moved here specifically for superfast broadband, or decided to renew their leases once the decision was made to go for the superfast connection.

"Now we are almost at capacity at the business park, which is fantastic news during what is still a difficult time for small-businesses in the UK."

Hatton Technology Park - which is the brainchild of the direct descendant of the father of the Industrial Revolution - is this month celebrating its first anniversary of having superfast broadband.

Johnnie Arkwright, owner of the park, said problems with the govern-



LEADING THE WAY: Graham O'Neill from ACIS, Ben King from WarwickNet and Johnnie Arkwright from Hatton Technology Park

ment programme led him to approach local firm WarwickNet, which provides a service that is 40 times faster than conventional broadband.

He added: "It is because of this obstruction that we went to another, more local provider who has given us fantastic broadband connectivity - ahead of the majority of the UK - with a minimum of hassle for the tenants there."

Ben King, managing director of WarwickNet, said: "Many companies dependent upon high speed internet to remain competitive feel that they have no choice but to be part of a university or larger business or science park close to urban hubs. But over the last 12 months,

Hatton Technology Park has exploded that myth in style.

"After all, this is the venture of Johnnie Arkwright, the great, great, great grandson of Richard Arkwright who invented the Spinning Jenny, the technology that ironically caused great swathes of rural dwellers to uproot to factories in the town.

"Now superfast internet is bringing businesses back to rural locations."

The small complex of converted agricultural buildings was connected in July last year, since which time the business for Hatton Technology Park has taken off.

Graham O'Neill, chief executive of ACIS - a not-for-profit distribution

network serving the national automotive paint and refinishing industry based at the park, said: "We had been at Hatton for some time but had decided to move on because we needed faster internet connectivity.

"We had even got as far as looking for other offices. However, we spoke to Hatton Estates about our needs and they responded by opening up a dialogue with all of the businesses here and WarwickNet.

"As a result, we are still here a year on and we are delighted with the internet connection.

"We deal with businesses across the UK as well as some of the biggest global automotive brands so it was critical for us to have both fast and robust internet access."

Aesthetics serves up a great year

ANDY Murray may still be basking in the glory of being the first British winner of the men's title at Wimbledon in 77 years, but one Coventry company is already looking ahead to next year's championship.

Aesthetics Event Staff Ltd, based at Electric Wharf, provided 15 staff at the tournament this year largely working in the Centre Court and Court One Debentures Club to host guests and members.

The company, which was founded by entrepreneur Lee Thomas in 1996, has received positive feedback from the All England Lawn Tennis Club and preparations for next year's event are underway.

She said: "It is the 12th year we have been involved at Wimbledon and the fifth year we have worked for the All England Lawn Tennis Club.

"Our staff are responsible for hosting and greeting guests and it's vital that they are friendly and knowledgeable and help to make it an outstanding experience for members.

"Of course, Andy Murray's success made it an unforgettable year and we were delighted to be part of the championship for such a historic occasion."

"It's been a great year of sport already for Aesthetics. We've worked at the Champions League Final at Wembley, the British Grand Prix at Silverstone and the Wimbledon Championships."

Nuneaton firm secures accreditation

NUNEATON'S Midlands Professional Development is celebrating a major success.

The firm, which is based at the town's EPIC Centre, has secured accreditation as an approved centre for the delivery of Chartered Management Institute qualifications.

The institute is the only chartered professional body in the UK dedicated to promoting the highest standards of management and leadership excellence.

Clare McKenzie, business manager at MPD, said: "The CMI courses are an excellent addition to our already superb range of programmes.

"Being a CMI Approved Centre will enable us to support local organisations in developing their managers to see the bigger picture, make better decisions, and better manage their people. With only one in five managers holding a management qualification this is a need for both the private and public sectors."

Local experts cautiously welcome borough plan

BUSINESS leaders in the north of Warwickshire have cautiously welcomed a new plan for Nuneaton and Bedworth borough.

Kelly Ford, the head of planning policy and economic development at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, presented the Borough Plan to the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber's north Warwickshire branch.

The plan proposes to provide 75 hectares of employment land, 7,900 new homes, 43,750 square metres of

non-food retail space, 4,050 square metres of food retail space and 30,000 square metres of new offices by 2028.

Like every authority across the country, the borough council must provide a development plan in order to meet the needs for future growth. Without it, the council has less control over where new developments could spring up.

The meeting with the Chamber is part of the consultation phase on the Borough Plan, which ends on August

30. Paul Carvell, the chairman of the Chamber's north Warwickshire branch, said: "We were very grateful to Kelly Ford and the borough council for presenting the Borough Plan to us.

"Our branch committee is made up of a range of companies across the area and they all had their own thoughts and comments on it.

"But we all welcome the fact that we now have a plan and would encourage other businesses to log onto the council's website and make their

own comments. We need to have ambition for economic growth but also a plan that the council can show is deliverable. That is something we will be scrutinising further but, on the face of it, the plans for employment space and homes look positive.

"Of course, these plans have to be backed up with an overall economic and infrastructure strategy and the Borough Council will have to show more specific details on this as the plan evolves over the next 12 months."