



# THE INVESTOR

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## NEW BODY WILL LOOK AFTER UK SHORES

**A NEW GOVERNMENT BODY CHARGED WITH MANAGING THE SEAS AROUND THE UK SHORES HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN TYNE AND WEAR.**

The new Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, Richard Benyon, visited Tyneside for the opening of the new Marine Management Organisation (MMO) at the Baltic in Gateshead last month.

The MMO, which has its base on Newcastle Business Park, employs 268 across the country – with 140 new jobs created at the organisation’s headquarters in Newcastle.

The organisation was created as part of the Marine and Coastal Access Act of 2009. It chose to locate its prestigious headquarters in this region following lengthy talks with a regional inward investment team led by Tyne and Wear Development Company.

Paul Buie, manager of Tyne and Wear Development Company, explained: “It’s fantastic to see the MMO up and running. It’s taken many months of talks and hard work behind the scenes to reach this point but I’m delighted such a high profile agency has chosen Tyne and Wear as its home.

“It’s a fantastic coup for the region that an agency of this stature is based here. It’s created 140 highly skilled jobs and over the coming years I anticipate it adding to the region’s reputation as a centre for marine and maritime expertise.”



Steve Gant, chief executive of the MMO

The MMO is one of the first non-departmental bodies to locate in the region following the Lyons Review of 2005. Its launch is the culmination of over two years’ hard work by Tyne and Wear Development Company, which helped to sell the region as an excellent location in the face of strong competition from across England.

Steve Gant, chief executive of the MMO, said the organisation was attracted to the region by the area’s fishing heritage, expertise of the regional universities, and the facilities such as the New and Renewable Energy Centre in Blyth. He added: “Tyneside actively considered the particular requirements of the MMO and submitted a comprehensive bid that excelled across all of the areas of assessment.

“This included a skilled workforce, coastal location, transport links and quality of life for staff. The support we received from Tyne and Wear Development Company was greatly valued.”

The MMO’s primary aim is to ensure that the seas are run in a productive and sustainable way as well as managing key issues such as the UK’s fishing fleet capacity and fishery quotas.

Richard Benyon, said: “Our seas are facing increasing pressures, but through the expertise in this one body we will be able to manage those pressures more effectively.”

## ALWAYS INVESTING

**TYNE AND WEAR DEVELOPMENT COMPANY DEMONSTRATED ITS INVESTMENT CREDENTIALS RECENTLY – WHEN IT PICKED UP ANOTHER AWARD.**

The area’s leading business development agency has been awarded Investors in People status once again for its commitment to people development.

The award was presented to the company by Robert Macleod, MD of Assessment North East, and underlines the strength of the team in delivering skilled support to business investors across Tyne and Wear.



(l to r) Deborah Fletcher, Anne Cooke and Carole Clark of Tyne and Wear Development Company with Robert Macleod

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Tyne and Wear Development Company Ltd is a controlled company within the meaning of Part V of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The relevant authorities are Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside MBC, South Tyneside MBC and Sunderland City Council.

## MOTOR INSURER SIGNALS AMBITIONS WITH NORTH EAST CENTRE

**AROUND 150 JOBS WILL BE CREATED IN THE REGION OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS BY THE BIRTH OF A NEW INSURER THAT PLANS TO BECOME A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE UK MOTOR INSURANCE MARKET.**

insurethebox has chosen Quorum Business Park in North Tyneside as the base for its first service centre. The company plans to target motorists, particularly young, newly qualified and low mileage drivers, with the prospect of lower premiums using advanced in-car technology to track their driving.

Quorum Business Park was chosen as the company’s preferred base following several months of talks with Tyne and Wear Development Company. It assisted the investment, acting as a central source of support from the beginning of the project through to completion. This included assistance identifying potential premises, business planning guidance and brokering in other sources of support.

Andy Haynes, joint chief executive of insurethebox, said: “We have an exciting and unique product, a first class management team and have recruited a highly skilled team on the ground at our service centre in North Tyneside. Tyne and Wear is the perfect location for us and we’re looking forward to growing the business here.

“We enjoy excellent facilities at Quorum and have access to people with great skills and experience. Add to that the advice and assistance from Tyne and Wear Development Company and its partners and it was an easy decision to locate here.”

Tyne and Wear Development Company worked alongside North Tyneside Council and One North East – which provided a Grant for Business Investment of £249,000. The team will continue to work with insurethebox to deliver aftercare support to assist the set up of operations at Quorum and the company’s long-term success.

Paul Buie, manager of Tyne and Wear Development Company, said: “insurethebox is an exciting addition



The company’s first customer

to the motor insurance market and has great potential. It speaks volumes for the people, skills and facilities in this area that the company chose to be based here.

“The region is a hotbed for investment projects like this and Tyne and Wear Development Company is proud to have played a pivotal role in supporting the firm’s ambitions alongside partners across the region.”

At the heart of the insurethebox system is a Telematics “Clear Box”, which is installed free of charge and monitors driver performance and mileage used. Good driving is incentivised through bonus miles.

Quorum development director Fergus Trim said: “I’m delighted to welcome insurethebox to Quorum Business Park. They have a fresh and exciting concept which I’m sure will bring growth and further new jobs to the region.”

North Tyneside’s elected Mayor Linda Arkley said: “It’s fantastic that insurethebox has chosen North Tyneside as its base for this innovative venture which will provide much needed jobs for this region.”



Mark Ferguson, insurethebox; Jen Parker, One North East; Jason Tipton, insurethebox; Paul Buie, Tyne and Wear Development Company; Andy Haynes, insurethebox; and Richard Prisk, North Tyneside Council

# WEAVING A NEW WEB

**AN AMBITIOUS DARLINGTON WEB DESIGN COMPANY IS WEAVING ITSELF A NEW HOME IN THE HEART OF NEWCASTLE AS IT LOOKS TO EXPAND ITS CLIENT BASE.**

Edward Robertson, which was founded in 1996 by co-owners Graham Miller and Simon Crisp, is opening its second office in the newly refurbished railway arches on Westgate Road, with the support of Tyne and Wear Development Company. The company designs, develops, optimises and hosts web sites, working closely with clients to make sure they get the best return on their investment.

Graham Miller said: "We currently have 12 people working at our head office in Darlington, but we have a handful of clients based in Newcastle. We really wanted to expand our business in the city and are now looking forward to recruiting more staff to handle our Newcastle accounts and generate new business in the area."

"Websites we've built have won the North East Business Internet Award six times, which proves we have what it takes to give the other fantastic web design agencies in

Newcastle a run for their money. The competition can only be good for other businesses."

The company has been supported by Tyne and Wear Development Company, which helped to identify the new property in central Newcastle.

Graham added: "Deborah at Tyne and Wear Development Company was so helpful. We gave her a spec of what we were after and she came back to us with a portfolio of about 12 properties in central Newcastle. She managed to book viewings all on the same day, which was great and didn't mean we were wasting any time."

Speaking of the new premises, Simon said: "The property she has found is absolutely perfect. We certainly didn't think we would manage to get an office right in the centre of Newcastle and so close to the railway station."

Deborah Fletcher, information officer at Tyne and Wear Development Company, said: "This is an ambitious and expanding company and we're delighted to have helped them find their new base. They'll really be at home in this developing part of Newcastle and could even attract new leads from the young businesses popping up around them."



Graham Miller (left) and Simon Crisp with Deborah Fletcher

# REMEMBER, REMEMBER, THE 5TH OF NOVEMBER

**CALLING ALL CONTACT CENTRES! THE BIGGEST NIGHT IN THE REGION'S CONTACT CENTRE CALENDAR IS SET TO RETURN WITH ENTRIES NOW OPEN FOR THE NORTH EAST CONTACT CENTRE AWARDS 2010.**

Taking place on Friday November 5 at Rainton Meadows Arena in Sunderland, this year's awards promise to be a sparkling night of celebration for a sector that remains one of the biggest in the North East.

Now in their eighth year, the awards are organised by Tyne and Wear Development Company in association with Northern Recruitment Group and aim to recognise and reward the achievements of teams and individual employees who have helped the contact centre industry become a success in the North East.

Contact centres interested in entering the awards have until Friday September 3 to submit their applications. Application packs are available to download now from [www.contactcentreawards.co.uk](http://www.contactcentreawards.co.uk) or by calling 0191 516 9099.

A total of nine awards are available including the prestigious North East Contact Centre of the Year – which has separate awards for centres under and over 250 seats. Other awards include: Contact Centre Adviser of the Year; Public Sector Contact Centre

Adviser of the Year; North East Customer Champion; Inspirational Leader of the Year; Contact Centre Dream Team; Outstanding People Development and North East Community Heroes.

Sarah Gibson, marketing officer at Tyne and Wear Development Company, said: "Once again we're looking forward to celebrating the talents of the region's contact centre industry."

"Contact centres are operating in a tough climate like all other sectors. These awards give us an opportunity to recognise those people who shine within the industry and reward them for all their ongoing hard work and success. The awards also highlight company excellence within the region."

The North East Contact Centre Awards are sponsored by NRG, Sunderland City Council, Contact Centre Professional, BQ Magazine, Premium People Recruitment Group, Cobalt Business Park, Business Solutions – Contact Centre Academy and Working Links. Call Centre Helper magazine is again lined up as the event's media partner.



Barclaycard and DWP Service Desk, EDS; winners of the 2009 North East Contact Centre Awards

# GATESHEAD COMPANY POWERS AHEAD

**A NORTH EAST COMPANY SPECIALISING IN THE DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE OF POWER ELECTRONICS AND ELECTRICAL MACHINES HAS RECEIVED A MAJOR INVESTMENT FOR A GROWING GLOBAL MARKET.**

Turbo Power Systems (TPS), which employs over 100 people in Gateshead and London, supplies drives, power electronic systems, high performance motors and generators to the energy, industrial, transport and defence sectors.

The company has received the investment – totalling £6.5m – from TAO Sustainable Power Solutions, a subsidiary of a Brazilian energy company, giving TAO a major stake in TPS and providing working capital for future products and collaborations.

The move comes at an exciting time for TPS when it has just reached an agreement with North American firm Bombardier to be the supplier of auxiliary power conversion systems for its new, flagship Innova people mover train. It has also signed an understanding with a major Japanese firm to supply power electronics products in Europe.

David Hancill, general manager at TPS Gateshead, said: "This investment is excellent news for TPS and will help to underpin future growth and the development of new technology. Crucially, it will help to boost our profile and opportunities around the world – particularly in the US and Canada where around 50 per cent of our business lies."

"There are very few companies worldwide that can match what we offer. Supplying high performance electric motors and power conversion systems gives us a real advantage over our competitors. This investment and the work we have contracted with Bombardier and our Japanese partner are real reasons for optimism."

TPS already boasts an impressive list of clients including The Boeing Company, Lotus Engineering and American giant McQuay. Gateshead is the nerve centre of TPS's power electronics division and the company is based in a state-of-the-art plant at Team Valley – having received support from Gateshead Council to relocate there three years ago. Current products range from power conversion systems for charging mobile phones



David Hancill and Alma Harrison

and computers on trains to the driver's cab air conditioning system on the London Underground.

In addition to new projects in North America and Europe, it is now looking towards the renewable sector and the development of applications that will connect power from renewable sources of energy to the national grid or de-centralised micro-grids.

Thanks to support from Tyne and Wear Development Company, and a grant from One North East, TPS will explore the potential of connecting energy from photo voltaic cells to charge electric vehicles. The project could eventually see PV cells installed in, for example, office or supermarket car parks to enable customers to plug-in and charge battery powered vehicles as they wait.

Tony Lakin, head of R&D at TPS, said: "The electric vehicle market is a rapidly growing sector. This is an exciting project that will explore the potential for charging electric vehicles from a renewable energy source and we have the expertise and technology to achieve this. It's great we're doing it in the North East which has real potential to be a leader and pioneer in the electric and battery powered vehicles sector. Being based in the North East means we have access to hugely talented workforce from our universities."

"We first entered the renewable energy market 15 years ago but there wasn't the same market need in the UK as there is now."

TPS receives ongoing business support from Tyne and Wear Development Company through the regional strategic account management programme – a bespoke scheme designed to help growing companies.

Alma Harrison from Tyne and Wear Development Company said: "TPS is a great example of an ambitious company that is developing innovative market leading technology from its base here in the North East. Its impressive facilities cannot fail to impress existing and potential customers and reflect not only the capabilities of its talented team, but also the quality of the innovative product range."

# CONTACT CENTRES CONNECT

The new group, which was created in response to calls from within the sector, aims to share best practice and give key players in the industry a chance to discuss common issues.

The network met for the first time earlier this year drawing upwards of 25 representatives from different contact centres across the region – with a good mix of centres of all sizes across the public and private spheres.

It has met on three occasions since – and will continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis – with a range of subjects under discussion including: recruitment, staff retention, people development and productivity.

Mark Smith, from Convergys, which is based in North Tyneside, was one of the key drivers behind the formation of the group. He said: "This is a unique network with a lot of talent and experience and has already proved very useful as a sounding board and way of building networks."

"The contact centre industry in the North East is very strong and this is a way of taking things forward."

Many of the challenges and success we see on a day-to-day basis are common across the sector. This is a great way to share ideas, experiences and solutions."

The network was set up with the support of Tyne and Wear Development Company, which is facilitating each meeting, and One North East and is free to attend.

Alma Harrison, from Tyne and Wear Development Company, said: "This is a key sector for the region and the new network is an important platform for people to share ideas and work together."

"The discussions so far have been very positive with people willing to share ideas and practices openly. Much of the focus has been around people-management and development, which is ultimately the key resource and asset for all contact centres."

"It's vital that this is not driven by us – and simply becomes a talking shop – but by the industry and discusses real issues. This is certainly what's happened so far. As we get to grip with all the issues, we will be in a better position to advise the sector and provide more effective support."

**THE REGION'S CONTACT CENTRES ARE IMPROVING THEIR CONNECTIONS THANKS TO THE FORMATION OF A NEW, DEDICATED INDUSTRY NETWORK IN THE NORTH EAST.**