

## Knowledge Thurrock Innovation Associates

Thurrock Learning Partnership has been successful bidding into the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** for the above project. Knowledge Thurrock Innovation Associates is a bid under Priority Axis 1 - Knowledge Transfer.

Thurrock Learning Partnership and Thurrock Council are delighted with this their first bid into ERDF which will enable them to address a number of key priorities for Thurrock.

This bid will enable us:

- To support the planned Thurrock Learning Campus to become the Knowledge base for Thames Gateway South Essex and a focus for knowledge transfer between our Higher Education (HE) Partners and businesses in Thurrock.
- Reduce carbon emissions and increase competitiveness within our Smaller and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs). We will be doing this by appointing graduates/ under-graduates to work as Innovation Associates with SMEs. The Innovation Associates will come from our HE partners, University of East London, Anglia Ruskin University and South East Essex College and will be supported by an appropriate expert from within the university/HE Institution.
- To increase opportunities for employment by graduates particularly important in an economic downturn. It is predicted that approximately 30% of graduates will be unemployed or not obtain graduate level work. This project will engage graduates/final year under-graduates with employers, who do not normally employ graduates and have no awareness of the potential value they can bring to a company.
- The value of the project is £507,000 of which £190,000 will come from ERDF, £150,000 from Thurrock Council's Local Authority Business Grant Initiative and the rest from match funding from our HE partners and SMEs

It is imperative for Thurrock to have a sound economy and reduce its carbon emissions. This project will help on both counts. Innovative projects from our Innovation Associates to reduce carbon emissions, which will also reduce costs/increase, are self-evidently beneficial to businesses. Having a sound environmental practice will assist companies in gaining contracts. Reducing carbon emissions is essential for the environment. Thurrock has the worst CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the region so the project will be especially beneficial to Thurrock.