Seminar 3

Innovation Matters



Gary Tomlinson

Solutions Director

SOS Systems

Why a Manor Royal technology community is worth building

MANOR ROYAL MATTERS • BREAKOUT SESSION

Innovation Matters

Why a Manor Royal technology community is worth building and what it will take

Gary Tomlinson | Solutions Director | SOS Systems
Manor Royal BID Board Director

THE OPPORTUNITY

Manor Royal: an economy of its own

600+

businesses, from global brands to start-ups

30,000+

Jobs, around a quarter of all Crawley employment

540 acres

of commercial space across 700 units

2013

since then, home to one of the UK's largest industrial BID

Imagine if all of that knowledge talked to itself.

Source: Manor Royal BID (manorroyal.org) and Manor Royal economic impact study

MANOR ROYAL
BUSINESS DISTRICT
CRAWLEY & GATWICK

WHAT MANOR ROYAL DOES

From aircraft to radiotherapy

Aviation and aerospace	Virgin Atlantic · Collins Aerospace · Thales
Medical technology	Elekta · Varian · Straumann's new UK HQ
Engineering and manufacturing	Dualit, Tokyo Electron, TPI
Logistics and Warehouse	Amazon, Eezehaul, Transvalair, Fedex
Financial and Business Services	People's Pension, Creative Pod, Rentokill
Automotive	Harwoods, Hyundai, Tesla

Six sectors. The same technology questions.

Sources: Manor Royal BID (manorroyal.org) · named businesses are examples, not a full list

HOW THIS SESSION WORKS

Six questions. One idea.

01

Where tech is taking us

Today’s workplace and what comes next

02

What holds us back

The challenges every business shares

03

What we could build

A Manor Royal that learns together

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QUESTION 1 OF 6 · WORD CLOUD

In one or two words: what technology has changed how your business works in the last two years?

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Poll Everywhere

In one or two words: what technology has changed how your business works in the last 2 years?

1



TODAY

Technology is already reshaping how we work

54%

of UK SMEs now use AI, up from 35% a year earlier

23%

was the figure in 2023. Adoption has more than doubled in three years

43%

of UK businesses identified a cyber breach or attack in the last 12 months

Sources: British Chambers of Commerce / Atos AI survey, March 2026 · DSIT Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2025/26

TODAY

Four forces shaping today's workplace

AI and automation

Admin, drafting, research and data work handed to AI, often by individuals, not by strategy.

Cloud and hybrid

Work happens anywhere, so systems, documents and data have to follow people.



Cyber risk

Every new tool widens the attack surface, and phishing is still the front door.

Data and compliance

More regulation and more scrutiny from customers, insurers and supply chains.

QUESTION 2 OF 6 · MULTIPLE CHOICE

Think of a recent technology project in your business. How did it go?

- Better than expected
- About as planned
- Worse than expected
- Too early to tell

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Poll Everywhere

Think of a recent technology project in your business. How did it go?

1

Better than expected

100%

About as planned

Worse than expected

Too early to tell

Q&A | Edit | Choices | Results | Lock

QUESTION 3 OF 6 · MULTIPLE CHOICE · PICK UP TO 2

If you could hand one repetitive task to technology tomorrow, what would it be?

- Invoices and accounts payable
- Data entry and rekeying
- Scheduling and rotas
- Reporting
- Chasing quotes, orders or payments
- Filing and finding documents
- Customer queries
- Something else

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Poll Everywhere

If you could hand one repetitive task to technology tomorrow, what would it be?

1

100%
Invoices and accounts payable

Data entry

Scheduling and Rotas

Reporting

chasing quotes, orders or payments

Finding documents

Customer queries

Q&A Edit Choices Results Lock

THE CHALLENGES WE SHARE

Every business can buy tech. Few get the full value from it.

Skills and capacity. No time or in-house expertise to weigh up options properly.

Cyber risk. More than four in ten businesses hit in a single year.

Vendor noise. Everyone claims AI. Few offer a neutral view.

Unclear return. Hard to know what good looks like until you've paid for it.

Going it alone. We each make the same mistakes, in isolation.

QUESTION 4 OF 6 · MULTIPLE CHOICE

When a technology decision feels risky, who do you ask first?

- Our current supplier
- Search engine or AI tool
- Our in-house IT team
- A peer in another business
- A business network or industry body
- Nobody, we just decide

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Poll Everywhere

When a technology decision feels risky, who do you ask first?

0

Our current supplier

Search engine or AI tool

Our in-house IT Team

A peer in another business

A business network or industry body

Nobody, we just decide

Q&A Edit

Choices Results Lock

THE OPPORTUNITY

What a connected district could unlock

Shared learning

Learn from your neighbours' mistakes before repeating them.

Teaming

Partner on bids, pilots and projects no single firm could win alone.

Faster adoption

Borrow a proven approach instead of starting from scratch.

Resilience

Share threat warnings and incident lessons across the district.

Talent

Pool training, apprentices and skills with local colleges.

Reputation

Make Manor Royal the place innovative firms want to be.

QUESTION 5 OF 6 · MULTIPLE CHOICE

If you could learn from your neighbours tech mistakes first, what might that save you in a typical year?

- A few days
- A few weeks
- Months of effort
- At least one costly mistake we’ve already made

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Poll Everywhere

If you could learn from your neighbours' tech mistakes first, what might that save you in a typical year?

1

A few days

100%
A few weeks

Months of effort

At least one costly mistake we've already made

Q&A
Edit
Choices
Results
Lock

THE PROPOSAL

The Manor Royal Innovation Community

Technology champions from across the district, meeting every quarter to share the challenges, failures and successes of putting technology to work.

Quarterly **Vendor-neutral** **Open to every BID business**

90 MINUTES

What a session could look like



15 MIN
Lesson learned
One member shares a project that went wrong and what they'd change.

20 MIN
Success story
A project that delivered, with real numbers and real costs.

30 MIN
Challenge clinic
Bring a live problem. The room helps solve it.

15 MIN
Teaming spotlight
Partnerships, joint bids and pilots looking for collaborators.

ALWAYS
Ground rules
No selling · Chatham House Rule · every size of business welcome

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Four things we need

1

Champions

One named person per business willing to share openly.

2

Hosts

Member businesses offering a room, rotating each quarter.

3

BID backing

Promotion, light admin and a home on BID channels.

4

A first date

Set together by the champions who sign up today.

Launch session: **[2027 Q1] at [venue]**

QUESTION 6 OF 6 · MULTIPLE CHOICE

Would your business put a technology champion forward for a quarterly Manor Royal Innovation Community?

- Yes — count us in
- Probably — tell me more
- Not right now

Respond at
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Poll Everywhere

Would your business put a technology champion forward for a quarterly Manor Royal Innovation Community?

1



A 100% Yes count us in

B 0% Probably tell me more

C 0% Not right now

Q&A Edit

Choices Results Lock

Let’s build it together.

Before you go….

Q&A · THANK YOU!

Gary Tomlinson | gary.tomlinson@sossystems.co.uk | Manor Royal BID

Our programme

NOW

Head to the
Main Conference Room

Plenary

Manor Royal Fireside Chat

Awards Announcement

Lunch