



# ADVANCED MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING

**POWERING  
INNOVATION**

# ADVANCED MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING IN NORFOLK — POWERING INNOVATION

Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering (AME) in Norfolk sits at the heart of the county's transformation into a high-value and innovation-driven economy. More than 47,500 people already work in manufacturing and engineering<sup>1</sup>, and the region hosts a diverse cluster spanning precision engineering, advanced materials, automotive, aerospace, military defence, pharmaceuticals and emerging space technologies. Together, Norfolk's AME businesses strengthen national resilience across food, energy, mobility and defence.

## THREE THEMES DEFINE ADVANCED MANUFACTURING & ENGINEERING IN NORFOLK

### 1. INNOVATION DRIVING PRODUCTIVITY

- Norfolk's AME sector generates **£42,000 GVA per head**, ranking it among the county's most productive industries<sup>1</sup>.
- Businesses are utilising advanced technologies to remain competitive. For example, AKP Ltd's integrated digital CNC design and simulation reduces downtime, eliminates errors and improves turnaround.
- Norfolk businesses, such as NE Engineering, are demonstrating the power of continuous investment. Since 2019, **NE has grown from a £400k to £6.2m turnover** business and now supplies original equipment manufacturers including Ferrari.
- The county is building a reputation as a specialist exporter. Camvac, for instance, sells 85% of its patented high-barrier laminates internationally.



- The Norfolk Local Growth Plan identifies AME and digi-tech as core to Norfolk's emerging economy, with dedicated organisations and hubs such as Hethel Engineering Centre, New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering (NAAME), Made Smarter Adoption and Productivity East accelerating SME innovation.
- The Made Smarter Adoption programme, helping SMEs implement digital technologies to improve efficiency, productivity and competitiveness, supported nearly 90 businesses in 2025/26, with funding doubled to £2.4m for 2026/27<sup>2</sup>.



**£17.5BN**  
SPACE SECTOR

## 2. HIGH-SKILL CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

- Skills anchor Norfolk's long-term economic future, with many manufacturing and engineering businesses nurturing talent through apprenticeships, with apprentice-trained professionals progressing into management. For example, Palm Paper has a strong track record of investing in apprenticeships as a pathway into leadership - the company's Operations Manager started as a Paper Technologist Apprentice in 2011.
- Employers are prioritising structured upskilling of personnel to address a shortage of senior engineers.
- The AME sector creates stable and sustainable career opportunities across Norfolk, especially in the county's growing market towns.

## 3. A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE SECTOR, ROOTED IN PLACE

- Norfolk's AME cluster sits within a major growth corridor, driven by research assets and engineering strengths<sup>1</sup>.
- The sector feeds supply chains supporting clean energy, agri-food, digital tech, military defence, aerospace and transport manufacturing, aligning strongly with national priorities for resilience and Net-zero transition.
- In an uncertain world, Norfolk's businesses are at the forefront of strengthening national security, for example MSI-Defence Systems is a world-leading supplier of naval equipment. In contrast, others manufacture precision parts crucial in national and international supply chains.
- **Space East** now includes over **390 member organisations** exploring how their capabilities and expertise can unlock opportunities in the UK's £17.5bn space sector. Established and pioneering space organisations are choosing to make Norfolk their home, such as Equipmake, who originally manufactured class-leading electric motors for buses and now delivers high-performance electric propulsion systems, designed and rigorously tested to meet the demands of next-generation aerospace technology.



# WHAT THE SECTOR NEEDS

- 1 Stronger skills and leadership development, alongside technical training, particularly in digital manufacturing.
- 2 Affordable finance and targeted investment to help SMEs withstand market volatility and adopt new technologies.
- 3 Competitive energy pricing and business rates to secure SME viability.
- 4 A stronger national voice for manufacturing to ensure support reaches SMEs across supply chains.



**Norfolk's AME sector is evolving into a globally competitive, technology-driven centre that fuels productivity, creates high-value careers and strengthens the UK's broader economic resilience.**

Sources: 1. Norfolk Local Growth Plan, 2. Norfolk County Council