



PRESS RELEASE

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Local companies urged to help 'Build the West of England'

A free business event will take place in Weston-super-Mare on Tuesday 16th October aimed at encouraging local construction companies to take advantage of the £5 billion of investment that will pour into new developments across the West of England over the next 20 years.

Rapid and high profile development demands a local workforce with the right training and skills to operate on large scale projects - such as Locking Parklands and Weston Park in Weston and Cabot Circus in Bristol.

The *Building the West of England* event will target small to medium sized construction companies and aims to encourage them to consider the opportunities that rapid new investment will bring along with the skills and training their workforce need to help win contracts on such developments.

The event has been organised by West at Work. This is a partnership project aimed at developing and supporting the economy by making sure that local people have the appropriate skills and opportunities to meet employers' needs, both now and in the future.

Ensuring that workers hold Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards and other industry specific skills cards is one example of how local firms can boost their chances of gaining work at some of the large development sites. CSCS is an industry requirement at large developments so having a 'carded' workforce can be central to securing contracts.

Simon Allen, Project Director at Bovis Lend Lease, who is speaking at the event, said: "Small to medium sized construction companies have an important role to play in providing the workforce that is needed to build the new developments that are planned over the next few years. However having a trained workforce with CSCS cards for example, is vital to secure this work."

He added: "There will be a lot of opportunities in the future and we want to make sure that local firms are able to take advantage of them and that they can provide a skilled local workforce to draw from."

Other speakers at the event include Peter Downing, Business Manager at Business Link and West at Work Director David Draycott.

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In addition specialists from North Somerset Council, Business Link, Weston College and ConstructionSkills will also be available to give advice about a variety of issues - such as meeting the contracting criteria, workforce training, improving business performance and accessing the supply chain.

West at Work Director, David Draycott said: "It is important that local people benefit and are able to take up training and employment opportunities that new developments bring. In turn, employers coming into the area want a readily available and appropriately skilled local workforce. By coming along to the event on 16 October construction companies can find out about the opportunities on offer and how they can get involved and secure future work."

Building the West of England will take place on Tuesday 16th October at the Winter Gardens, Royal Parade, Weston-super-Mare from 3-7pm. To book a place or find out more information contact events@businesswest.co.uk or ring 01275 373 373 and ask for the events department.

The event is one in a series aimed at helping local construction companies to gain work at major development sites. The next event will take place in South Gloucestershire on Monday 26 November.

West at Work is a partnership between the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the South West of England Regional Development Agency (South West RDA), Jobcentre Plus, Business West, Connexions, Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council.

For more information about West at Work visit www.westatwork.co.uk

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For more information please contact Jane Samuel on 07789 705867 or at jane.samuel@lsc.gov.uk

Alternatively contact the West at Work team on 0117 3726452 or at westatwork@lsc.gov.uk

