



## Jobs boost for city residents

Birmingham jobseekers have been boosted over the last 18 months thanks to a quiet revolution in the way that council contracts for business are agreed.

More than 5,000 job opportunities have been identified for local people since July 2010, when new guidelines were set up to ensure that any new contracts for council business had to give a high priority to innovative 'jobs and skills' clauses.

These clauses mean that Birmingham people have to be considered for any jobs and training opportunities created as a result of the contracts.

The council's Employment Access Team (EAT) has supported clients across the council to include the policy on £4.7 billion worth of contracts to date – with another £1 billion in the pipeline.

Ian Peat (pictured left) was unemployed before gaining work at Pannel Croft, a £22 million affordable housing development being built in Newtown for older people – a partnership between Birmingham City Council and The Extra-Care Charitable Trust. Jobs and skills were seen as an essential part of the contract, ensuring that local people could be trained and supported to access the job opportunities available. Contractors were required to recruit seven unemployed local residents. The developer, Keepmoat FHM, has already met this target, recruiting to vacancies including labourers, administration and security, five of which were residents from within two miles of the site.

Further discussions are now taking place to secure job opportunities on site once the development is complete.

■ Sue Hall from the Employment Access Team pictured talking to Ian Peat who she helped find employment with Keepmoat FHM construction.

## A creative future

Creative City, a bright new concept to help energise the city's creative industries, was launched by Culture Minister Ed Vaizey MP in front of an audience of representatives drawn from Birmingham's many cultural and creative organisations and agencies, last October.

The groundbreaking project – between the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise (LEP) Partnership and the Birmingham Cultural Partnership – will bring together public and private sector investment in a new fund for Birmingham and the LEP area, to support activities and projects linked to the LEP's economic strategy, so that culture and creativity are harnessed as a force to drive recovery.

The initiative will develop a vision for a new 'museum quarter' in Eastside, including a new museum of photography and the creation of a new contemporary art gallery.

## Brum is UK BIDs capital

Birmingham is leading the way in Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in the UK, with three newcomers joining the ranks.

A BID is where businesses, within a defined area, vote in a secret ballot to invest collectively in additional projects and services specifically for their area, such as street improvements including signage, flowers and festive lights, business support and marketing and promotion. These additional services are above that of the basic service provided by the council and other public bodies.

Following successful BID Ballots in the autumn, Acocks Green, Northfield and Sutton Coldfield BIDs start in January for a period of five years. The Retail Birmingham and Erdington BIDs also succeeded in their Renewal Ballots, extending their work for a further five years to 2017. This brings Birmingham's total number of BIDs now to nine. The new BIDs join those already firmly established in Broad Street, Colmore Business District, Retail Birmingham and Southside in the city centre, together with Erdington and Kings Heath, bringing in between them, over £13 million of private sector investment during their terms. A BID is currently under development for the city's Jewellery Quarter, which, if backed by the businesses, will start in the summer.

## Modern service adapts to changing times

Birmingham City Council is showing it can adapt fast to changing times, as it launches a trailblazing new company that can provide services, not only to the council, but also to other public and private sector organisations.

Due to start trading in April, Acivico will offer high-quality, modern construction and property-related services. With a range of transformed, modern services and experienced staff, Acivico will be able to offer a highly competitive and professional service to customers. Services will range from architecture to building surveying, engineering to interior design and much more.

Cllr Randal Brew, the council's cabinet member for Finance, said: "Acivico offers us a great opportunity to modernise and transform the services we offer.

"It will contribute to the solutions to the financial challenges the council faces, by reducing overheads, bringing into play the benefits of economies of scale and generally being a more efficient way of doing things."

And Acivico will be managing the new Constructing West Midlands Framework (CWM). CWM is another first for the region, representing a new partnership approach to the way that vital major construction projects and repair and maintenance services are carried out across the West Midlands.

Developed by the city council, the framework provides all public bodies across the West Midlands with access to a network of top quality local and national contractors, who have won bids to provide the most competitive services. This reduces the time normally involved in lengthy purchasing and contractual negotiations, provides the most economic costs and gives total assurance of quality and compliance with relevant legislation.

For more information on Acivico go to [www.acivico.co.uk](http://www.acivico.co.uk)  
For more information on CWM contact:  
[damian.donnelly@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:damian.donnelly@birmingham.gov.uk) or  
[sean.mcmulkin@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:sean.mcmulkin@birmingham.gov.uk)