

Our Place

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Sustainability in the News – No 2

This is your latest extract of news stories around sustainability and regeneration all taken from the regional on-line newsletter – bdaily – in recent weeks.

They will help you and your pupils understand some of the current issues surrounding sustainability and to learn of some of the new initiatives, products and services being offered in this growing area.

We hope they provide inspiration and ideas.

Our Place

being delivered across the region through a



B daily 8.2.08

Green light for ARC plans

Plans to rejuvenate one of the major gateways into Sunderland city centre could create up to 450 new jobs. Offices, apartments, retail space, and a hotel are to be built on Farringdon Row on the western approach into the City.

The scheme, led by regeneration company Sunderland arc, was approved on Tuesday. Developers aim to start work on site in late summer. It will be the first of a three phase £130m development for Farringdon Row. The scheme aims to improve the appearance of the area through landscaping and public spaces.

Bryan Sanderson, chairman of Sunderland arc, said: "This is fantastic news for the City of Sunderland. To see work start on this key site will be a massive step forward and just the beginning in terms of the arc's ambitious plans for the City.

"We have already seen great progress being made in the Sunnyside area to the east of the City. This new development on Farringdon Row will inject new vibrancy and wealth into another area of the City, transforming the western approach into Sunderland and making the most of the site's magnificent waterside views of the River Wear."

Steve Gawthorpe, area director of English Partnerships - the Government's Urban Regeneration Agency, said: "This is another milestone in delivering high quality urban regeneration on one of Sunderland's key development sites. It augurs well for future key projects within the city; indicating the attractiveness of Sunderland as a location for investors and developers."

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B Daily 11.2.08

Collaboration events for farmers

Livestock farmers in Northumberland and County Durham are being offered the chance to find out more about commercial farms that are working together to improve profits, reduce costs and reach new, premium markets.

A series of meetings later this month will offer farmers the chance to speak to English Food and Farming Partnerships' (EFFP) new regional manager, Sue Scott, and to other specialists on business collaboration about opportunities to become more efficient and maximise their returns.

The 'Share to Rear, Share to Farm' meetings in Wooler, Crook, Morpeth, Alnwick, Chollerford and Eggleston have been organised by EFFP to help sheep and beef farmers seize new opportunities and to respond to the challenges presented by mounting cost pressures, the impact of disease threat and reduced market prices.

Sue said: "Although beef prices have rallied recently there is still tremendous financial pressure on livestock farmers, particularly on those holdings where there is no production alternative. "The evenings will give farmers a chance to speak to specialists and North East farmers who are running real commercial enterprises where this type of collaboration is happening to good effect."

The 'Share to Rear, Share to Farm' meetings will also cover investment priorities for the new Rural Development Programme for England. To find out more or for booking arrangements, contact Sue Scott on 01388 835948, email sue.scott@effp.com, or visit

B Daily 12.2.08

DigitalCity seeks help from creative businesses

Creative businesses across the North East are being asked for their opinions on which skills would most benefit them and help them to expand. Teesside regeneration programme DigitalCity wants local companies to let them know exactly what skills and information would help them the most with their growth plans.

Based at the University of Teesside's Phoenix Building, in the Institute of Digital Innovation, DigitalCity offers specialist facilities, business development and mentoring as well as free workshops hosted by some of the creative sectors leading names.

DigitalCity is currently putting together its Spring/Summer programme of workshops, seminars and master-classes and wants local firms to offer suggestions on what they would like included.

Scott Watson, enterprise co-ordinator for DigitalCity, said: "Our ultimate aim is to nurture North East talent and to encourage entrepreneurship. The region is already a hotbed of digital creativity and DigitalCity is currently working with people from a wide range of backgrounds such as film-makers, photographers, artists and computer games developers.

"The workshops and master-classes are an invaluable part of what we do and provide businesses with the knowledge to help them grow. They're also open to those companies working in more traditional creative industries such as fine artists and glass makers. As we put together our next programme we want to hear from local companies about what it is they really want to learn about to help them to expand."

To get in touch with DigitalCity and offer your thoughts contact Scott Watson at scott@thedigitalcity.org or call 01642 384 332.

B daily 14.02.08

New superstore planned for Blyth

Local businesses will this week be consulted on plans to build a new superstore in Blyth as part of proposals for the regeneration of the town centre. The proposals are for the new supermarket to be developed by Morrison's on the town's existing Morrison's site and surrounding area. The development aims to offer residents improved facilities and support the rejuvenation of Blyth's traditional retail centre.

As part of the redevelopment proposals a number of businesses in the immediate vicinity have been invited to attend a one-to-one liaison session with representatives from South East Northumberland

and North Tyneside Regeneration initiative (SENNTRi) and Blyth Valley Borough Council in order to discuss their personal and business requirements.

Jeremy Sherlock, Director of SENNTRi said: "The new superstore proposal is part of wider plans to regenerate Blyth and revitalise the town centre. We want to restore the town's traditionally vibrant town centre and Market Place. However, these plans will impact upon a small minority of businesses and we want to ensure that those affected are fully supported throughout the process."

These developments form part of the wider plans for Blyth which include up to £19.8 million of investment over the next 3 years in order to link the town centre and Market Place to the nearby quayside where regeneration work has proved hugely successful in recent years.

Employment rise due to older workers?

UK unemployment fell by 61,000 to 1.61 million in the three months to the end of December, government figures show. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also said the number of people claiming jobseeker's allowance in January fell by 10,800 to 794,600.

The latest official labour market statistics, published earlier today by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), show that the UK jobs market was performing remarkably well in the final quarter of 2007. But the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) said that a number of conundrums surround the ONS figures.

John Philpott, Chief Economist at the CIPD, said: "Taken at face value the ONS figures suggest that most new jobs at present are going to people aged 50 and over - this age cohort accounts for almost 6 in 10 of the additional people in work last year. But this sits oddly with the observation that most new jobs are being taken by migrant workers - a group overwhelmingly aged under 40.

"We reckon this conundrum is explained by the fact that migrant workers are taking the lion's share of new job vacancies while older workers are instead better able than in the past to hold onto their jobs. In jargon terms, over 50s employment is rising because of increased job retention not increased hiring of older workers. What this also highlights is that home grown workers, not just those from overseas, have benefited from the jobs boom of recent years. It remains to be seen which groups will fare best when the jobs market next enters tougher times."

B daily 15.02.08

Minister launches employment partnership in Middlesbrough

Stephen Timms, Department for Work and Pensions Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform, visited Teesside this week to launch a joint initiative with a local employer.

The Minister met representatives from SembCorp Utilities and other companies from the North East Process Industries Cluster (NEPIC) as they signed up to the government's Local Employment Partnership (LEP) programme. Companies involved in the scheme pledge jobs for the long-term unemployed and those at a disadvantage in the jobs market - such as lone parents and people with a disability or health condition wanting to return to work.

SembCorp Utilities are taking the lead role with this initiative, along with other NEPIC companies, giving a number of their vacancies to people on benefits in exchange for help with recruitment from Jobcentre Plus. To get these people ready for work Jobcentre Plus will arrange training schemes, giving them the necessary skills and experience so they can go on to compete for the jobs.

Stephen Timms said: "Through Local Employment Partnerships like this one in the NEPIC cluster of companies we aim to support an additional 6,000 people in the North East off benefits and into work by March 2009. "It is a question of supporting people to overcome their barriers to work and giving them the opportunity to prepare themselves for specific opportunities."

George Ritchie of SembCorp Utilities said: "We in industry must take the initiative to solve our skills gap problems as there is a shortage of new entrants into our industry through traditional routes, so we must innovate and explore other options, of which this is one of them. "Given this untapped resource on our doorstep we must give disadvantaged, unemployed people in our own region the opportunity of sustained employment and the continued development of their skills in our industry. This demonstrates the commitment of the multi-national companies, operating in our area, to the local community."

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Mailing group goes 3D

Virtual reality animations produced in 3D are proving to be a major growth area for a North East mail distribution company. The new multi-media division set up by nemic group ltd has seen demand for anything from a single CD up to 10 million for individual customers.

Director Colin Bryant said: "Virtual reality, in particular, is a specialist area and becoming increasingly popular with companies from almost every sector. "The 3D aspect is such a powerful tool when it comes to demonstrating a new product or as part of a training manual. For example, we recently produced an animation for a multi-national equipment company with 3D proving to be a highly effective way of taking site engineers through the installation or repair of equipment. "We are now producing 3D animations on equipment, products and games for companies working in many different industries."

New clients include companies from the music industry and education sector and recent contracts have involved producing CDs for charity campaigns and health and safety guides.

Colin said: "We recently put a 160 pg booklet on to a mini CD that can be posted for the cost of a first class letter. "It is an easy and cost-effective method of disseminating information and many companies now use CDs alongside printed material as part of their direct mailing operation."

The division was initially set up to meet demand from nemic's existing clients who wanted their print, mailing and multi-media needs managed under one roof.

The nemic group website can be visited at www.nemic-ltd.com.

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WEEE problem for small businesses

Many small business owners are unaware of environmental regulations which could save them money, a survey has found. One year after it was introduced, just 12% of small businesses could name the regulations in the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) legislation.

The legislation, which was introduced in January 2007 to reduce the amount of electrical waste going to landfill, states that it is up to the manufacturer, not the owner, to dispose of electrical equipment purchased after August 2005.

Environmental guidance website NetRegs said that small businesses ignoring WEEE legislation could be paying the price through avoidable waste charges and unnecessary effort in disposing of their own electrical waste. It added that small businesses generate over 60% of the one million tonnes of electrical equipment thrown away every year in the UK.

Richard Martin, programme manager at NetRegs, said: "It is worrying that only one in eight small businesses are aware of WEEE legislation unprompted. "The good news for small businesses is that WEEE legislation can help businesses dispose of their electrical products sustainably - in many - cases, at no cost.

"Where previously businesses may have had to pay for a skip, now they can contact the producer of electrical goods they have purchased since 2005 to dispose of their WEEE."

He advised businesses to check that manufacturers are legally registered and already conforming to legislation before buying a new piece of equipment.

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B daily 18.02.08

National award for campus development

Northumbria University's City Campus East development has won a national award by being named Low Carbon New Build Project of the Year. Faber Maunsell, who were the building services engineers for the project, received the award together with Northumbria's Director of Estates, Trevor Thurlow from record-breaking yachtswoman Dame Ellen MacArthur.

The Low Carbon Performance Awards were launched this year by the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers in association with E.ON to celebrate achievements in delivering carbon savings in buildings.

City Campus East opened last September and around 9000 students now occupy the site. Built on the site of the former Warner Bros' cinema, the University recycled 95% of the demolition materials from the site. It has also recycled 75% of the materials on the new site, using the rubble as a sub-base and recycling all glass and scrap metal.

Other green features include solar collectors on the roof to produce hot water, collecting rain water to flush toilets and sensor-controlled heating and lighting systems ensuring energy is only used when rooms are occupied.

Trevor said: "We've already won a number of local awards but it's quite another thing to secure a prestigious national award where we have been judged by our peers against development projects

across the UK. "The University's firm commitment to sustainable development was a critical requirement of the brief to the project delivery team and has been recognised by this award."

B daily 19.02.08

North East colliery to reopen?

Three firms have expressed interest in reopening a closed Northumberland coal mine. Whittle Colliery near Alnwick will be auctioned in May at a guide price of £4m.

Three companies have inquired about bidding for the 56-acre site to reopen it as a mine, a spokesman for auctioneers Colliers CRE said. The site, which closed in 1997, has planning consent for coal extraction until 2019.

Simon Rigall, head auctioneer at Colliers CRE, said: "We did not expect interest from coal mining operations but we have had approaches from two UK companies and a firm in Spain. "The demand for energy from China and India has pushed the price of all raw products up and it's certainly this which has brought it to a head."

Alnwick District Council said any application to reopen the mine would be subject to a condition for environmental restoration once extraction had finished.
