£1m project to support Nottingham's construction industry workers

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Nottingham's growing construction industry needs new workers and is now pulling together on a new initiative to help jobless city residents benefit from the emerging skills demand.

A new scheme has been launched by Nottingham City Council, with a launch event attended by over 60 local construction businesses, for a £1million project to support the local construction industry, fill the skills gap in the sector and ensure local people can access employment and training opportunities.

The project is a partnership between Nottingham City Council and the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). It will give a boost to the sector by;

- Helping construction companies to develop the skills required to be able to successfully compete in today's market and win more business
- Supporting local public sector organisations and developers achieve social value on their projects, such as the recent City Council policy of delivering at least 70% of procurement contracts through local business
- Benefitting Nottingham's hardest to reach jobseekers by supporting entries to a construction career at all levels and removing barriers to employment. Traineeships, wage incentives, pre-employment training and jobs brokerage are all part of the service.

Councillor Nick McDonald, Portfolio Holder for Jobs, Growth and Transport at Nottingham City Council elaborated: "We have a clear commitment in this city to playing a major role in promoting construction and increasing the competitiveness of our local businesses so they can secure more work.

"Our other priority lies in ensuring that those who are hardest to reach in the jobs market are supported to benefit from this, through jobs, trainee schemes, and thinking laterally to overcome the barriers some face in getting into work.

"We're seeing a huge increase in demand for skilled workers from this industry, and it is essential that we do all we can to turn this into a benefit for our residents."

New entrants to the sector, experienced workers who may have had to leave the industry during the recession and young people who are not in education or training will all be supported through the programme, which focuses on buyers, local business and on workforce in a combined approach.

Mick O'Flynn, Sector Strategy Manager for CITB, said: "This exciting project is a unique collaboration between CITB and Nottingham City Council to support local business growth in the city.

"With over 3,000 construction jobs expected to be created each year in the East Midlands between 2015 and 2019, it is vital we deliver more skills in Nottinghamshire and the wider area.

"This partnership will enable local businesses to address their skills needs and support training for young people and the unemployed which is a positive step towards creating new jobs and growth in the local community."

Businesses attending the launch event also welcomed this new approach. Jon Johnson of Nottingham Builders Ltd started his business in 2008 with the support of the Princes Trust.

He has since built his company up to a level where he now employs ten people and is working closely with the Nottingham Jobs service run by Nottingham City Council to find more workers. He was one of the first to attend the employer training courses offered through the scheme.

He commented: "The CITB Business Improvement in Construction course was a real eye opener. It challenged me to re-think and reconsider some of the approaches we have made as a business. I intend to put into practice some of the lessons learnt from the course immediately, which I hope will help to secure my company more business.

"This course also gave me an unexpected opportunity to network with other forward-thinking local construction businesses which was priceless."

Various programmes of support are open to local business and to jobseekers. To find out more about the programme, businesses can contact Nathan Wilkins, Project Co-Ordinator on 0115 876 5426 or email nathan.wilkins@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

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