



Go-ahead for Digital Media Centre

Work is underway on the construction of an all new £21.5 million Digital Media Centre in Leicester. The funding has been made available by Leicester City Council, LSEP, *emda*, European Regional Development Fund, De Montfort University and Blueprint.

The Digital Media Centre will replace Phoenix Arts in Leicester, providing three cinema screens and a digital exhibition space called 'The Cube'. It will also house digital production facilities and through De Montfort University's involvement, will benefit from the latest research in media and related technologies.



“The Digital Media Centre is a unique and exciting project which will complement the Performing Arts Centre and further strengthen the development of the cultural quarter.”

The building will have space for over 68 new businesses, continuing the success of the Leicester Creative Business Depot, and there will be a café/bar open to the public. This unique building will also have 63 high quality city-living apartments, all using the very latest environmental technology to help make the whole scheme environmentally sustainable.

Ross Willmott, leader of Leicester City Council and LSEP board member, said: “The Digital Media Centre is a unique and exciting project which will complement the Performing Arts Centre and further strengthen the development of the cultural quarter. By investing up to £7 million the council is demonstrating its continued commitment to

the regeneration of Leicester and its growing reputation as a place where the arts and its associated industries can thrive and prosper”.

Rick Moore, chairman of LSEP, said: “We are keen to encourage the growth of the digital media sector in Leicester and Leicestershire and this project will provide a useful anchor to the development of the sector.

“It will help LSEP achieve our long term aims and objectives in bringing into use new and upgraded employment space, new jobs will become available and new businesses will be established in an area of the city where they are most needed.”

The building is due to open to the public in 2009.

Creative Industries top choice for graduates

A project funded by *emda* and LSEP that aims to find graduates jobs in creative industries is reporting an emerging recruitment trend in the sub-region; more graduates are being placed in the Creative Industries sector than any other.

HotProspects, which has received £300k funding from LSEP, was launched in June 2006 to act as a 'matchmaking service'

linking the best graduates to those businesses in the region looking to employ new talent. The service has placed over 500 graduates, 200 of these in Leicester Shire. Over 12,000 applications have been made since HotProspects launched and there are currently over 250 active jobs registered on the website.

Fiona Perfect, account manager for HotProspects, said: "There is a real demand for graduates who want to work in the creative industries. We currently have vacancies for fashion designers, garment and fabric technologists, graphic designers and art workers, as well as IT and media opportunities."

Iain McCracken, project director for HotProspects, said: "We have been

overwhelmed at how well the service has been received in Leicester Shire. Businesses are really taking advantage of the service, with almost 150 SMEs currently registered from the sub-region. It is not only SMEs which are taking advantage of HotProspects, Leicester Shire based global companies DHL and Caterpillar have also registered."

HotProspects has developed a free CD-ROM and workbook, designed to give companies a step by step approach to graduate recruitment.

For more information about HotProspects or for a copy of the CD-ROM please call 0845 450 5460 or visit www.hotprospects.org.uk

HotProspects

Leicester based company CFE scored a hat-trick with HotProspects, as it has recruited three graduates through the service. Founded in 1997, CFE works with government departments and agencies across the UK, providing end to end support developing and implementing public policy. Services in this area range from management support, project design, delivery and management, to the delivery of high quality research.

Raj Patel, project manager at CFE, said: "We traditionally employ graduates for our entry level positions, as we find they have the transferable skills needed. We can then offer both in-house and external training to help graduates progress.

"Using HotProspects has allowed us to significantly reduce the time and cost of recruiting, by helping us to identify a short list of candidates suitable for the roles we have within CFE."



Raj Patel, project manager CFE, Jeff Moore, chief executive *emda* and Iain McCracken, project director HotProspects

LSEP sponsors Leicestershire Business Awards 2008

LSEP will be a headline sponsor of the Leicestershire Business Awards which are being held for the 15th year and are set to be the best yet. The judges are about to visit each of the finalists before choosing the seven category winners.

Those winners will be announced at the Awards Gala Dinner on 18th April 2008 and entered for the top prize of Business of the Year. The winners of the major prize will be chauffeured home in a Bentley to begin in style their year at the top.

Other headline sponsors of the Leicestershire Business Awards are Tenon and RBS and further information is available at www.bizawards.co.uk



Judges of the Leicestershire Business Awards 2008

Success for Leicester Shire Moneyline

The Leicester South MP, Sir Peter Soulsby, opened a showcase event that featured six entrepreneurs who have taken up the challenge of starting and developing their own business.

They all faced many barriers and turned to Leicester Shire Moneyline after having applications for loans rejected by banks, building societies and other financial institutions. One of those to have received a loan admitted he had a bad credit record after the failure of an earlier business idea.

Leicester Shire Moneyline is a social enterprise which offers loans to enterprising people throughout the sub-region who are otherwise unable to access affordable credit. They have so far offered 40 loans totalling over £120k.

LSEP funds Leicester Shire Moneyline along with Leicester City Council, Leicester Housing Association, RBS Natwest, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and the European Regional Development Fund.

The event took place during enterprise week and those present heard inspirational stories, tales of personal achievement and examples of the impact Moneyline is having on the Leicester Shire economy.



Beverley and Vanice Lawrence, BEVA Hair & Beauty

Sisters Beverley and Vanice Lawrence spoke about starting BEVA Hair and Beauty and their plans to continue to develop their business. They are planning to purchase a second property and enable young people to learn new skills whilst still at work.



Daniel Mwamba, UKZAMBIANS

the 50,000 Zambians living in the UK had for news and information. Daniel launched a website and has since secured financial help from Moneyline to continue publishing a regular magazine.

“Leicester Shire Moneyline is a social enterprise which offers loans to enterprising people throughout the sub-region who are otherwise unable to access affordable credit”

Another interesting story related to the magazine UKZAMBIANS and Daniel Mwamba who recognised the desire that

Leicester Shire Moneyline has demonstrated that with just a little help people can realise their dreams.

Partners recognise future business ideas



Martin Traynor making a presentation to Harriett Lee

LSEP sponsored the ‘You Can Do It’ awards which offered young people aged 14–19 from Leicester, two days coaching at De Montfort University’s Innovation Centre.

They then had several weeks to put together a business plan that would convince the judges that their sound ideas could be turned into potential future businesses.

Leicester North West Alchemy supported the training and competition.

LSEP sponsored the award for creativity and innovation and the winning entry was the one that showed most imagination, flair, flexibility, collaborative working and of course was based around an exciting new idea.

The presentation was made by Martin Traynor, deputy chairman of LSEP, to Harriett Lee who had put together a business plan to make handmade cards of designs very different to those on sale now.

The judges were very impressed by many of the entries because they showed evidence of market research and other preparatory work.

Leicester Shire's new Economic Strategy

LSEP is getting ready to circulate the first draft of the new Economic Strategy for the sub-region. It will present a statement of vision, priorities and desired outcomes in a concise way that will appeal to individuals, businesses

and the agencies responsible for delivering the outcomes.

Over 300 people from the private, third and public sectors have already been involved in the consultation process and not only will they be able to see how their thinking has shaped the strategy, but they will also get further opportunities to help develop the final strategy.

Further consultation is planned for February to which representatives of all sectors will be invited. The strategy will be finalised during March and published in April. LSEP is also looking to hold an event in May that will communicate the key messages from the strategy.

The document won't attempt to cover delivery arrangements but will recognise the need for delivery plans to be drawn up to support the strategy.

New Mountsorrel Access Centre is officially open

A new Access Centre, which has cost a total of £800k, has officially been opened. To mark the occasion Lyn Brown MP, chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group of Libraries and Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, Rick Moore, chairman of LSEP and Mike Jones, chairman of Leicestershire County Council visited the venue.



This new community facility is situated on the site of Church House, which belonged to Will Antill. It has been renovated and extended to provide two storey facilities incorporating a brand new library, learning centre and exhibition and meeting area.

Rick Moore, chairman of LSEP, said, "Since LSEP and Leicestershire County Council realised

there was the potential for access centres across Leicestershire, LSEP alone has invested £1.6 million which has enabled the development of 17 centres. Our interest in the programme stems from the fact they are giving everyone equal opportunities to access learning, training and employment opportunities which in turn are improving the economy in the sub-region."

Mike Jones, chairman of Leicestershire County Council, said, "I am pleased that the County Council has been able to work in partnership to bring about this wonderful new resource for the people of Mountsorrel. The new library now has so much to offer everyone in the community."

Other partners involved in the project were Charnwood Borough Council and Mountsorrel Parish Council.

New improved statistics and research website

www.lsr-online.org is a new website, designed to make information that was previously available on either the LSORA or Leicester Shire Intelligence websites more accessible.

The new site gives user friendly access to a wealth of data in tabular, chart and map formats. Starting with a simple search box, the user can select geographical areas and statistics, view results as tables and charts, and then create thematic interactive maps of the results, all with a few clicks of the mouse.

Users can browse reports or search the reports database by keywords to find exactly what they're looking for, quickly and easily.

The aim of the new look research site is to broaden the user base. In addition to partners it hopes to gain attention from businesses, universities, libraries, schools and the general public.

Anyone who wishes to use the information needs to set up a free user account and is invited to feedback on the changes.

Please email admin@lsr-online.org or visit the user forum online at www.lsr-online.org.

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