

# May News



## City Corporation encourages global firms to think local

THE CITY of London traditionally generates about ten per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product. Even in difficult financial times the square mile is still making vast sums of money.

The City Corporation has a long and proud record of spreading the benefits of its wealth beyond its immediate boundaries – its 108 livery companies are substantially charitable institutions and the corporation manages large tracts of recreational land elsewhere in the capital, including Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath and six south London commons.

The corporation is concerned that boroughs on its fringes are not benefiting as much as they might from its commercial strength, so it has introduced a number of initiatives to help redress the balance. And it has sought the help of BtoB to organise one of them.

International companies in the square mile spend significant sums servicing their businesses and the corporation believes more of it should end up in the pockets of small and medium-sized firms in boroughs like Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Camden, Islington, Lambeth and Southwark.

The first step was a Meet the Buyers event arranged by BtoB at the Barbican early in March. The day was well attended with 26 of The City's big names coming along for face-to-face interviews with 150 potential suppliers.

The kind of work on offer ranges from legal and financial support to construction and office cleaning contracts.

BtoB's Tim Gordon, who managed the event, says: "It went really well. There was a good buzz, with lots of interest and enthusiasm on both sides.

"I know of a number of firms that have secured contracts already and others who are close to doing so. All the suppliers who came along thought it was a worthwhile thing to do and the potential buyers were happy with the experience too."

Tim says the Corporation is pleased with the day. It is in the process of evaluating the whole initiative, the beauty about Meet the Buyers is that the return on investment can be accurately measured with surveys 6 weeks and 6 months after the event.

More information:

[www.sellingtothecity.co.uk](http://www.sellingtothecity.co.uk)

[www.apprenticeshipfair.co.uk](http://www.apprenticeshipfair.co.uk)

Check out [www.bto.co.uk](http://www.bto.co.uk) for future international events, both in the UK and overseas.

## Virtual meetings are the smart way to make initial contacts

THERE IS no substitute for a face-to-face meeting with business prospects – the chance to look decision-makers in the eye and listen carefully to what they say and how they say it.

But that can entail hours – or even days – of travelling in the hope that when you finally meet you will be able to do a deal.

Such a journey could be an expensive waste of time – in the present economic climate it would be better to shorten the odds before you travel, if you can.

Enter a new virtual form of BtoB's highly successful 'Meet the Buyers' format that takes the hassle and most of the guesswork out of the initial contact.

You will still have a face-to-face meeting, even if your business prospect is an ocean or more away, but you will do so from the comfort of your own office using a video link that allows you to watch a presentation and/or look at technical documents as well as ask and answer questions about a potential deal.

Dean Brotherton, BtoB's man in the Midlands, has just arranged what he believes is the first such event of its kind. He did so for British suppliers in the aerospace industry and buyers from as far afield as Brazil, India and Japan.

BtoB worked with the Midlands Aerospace Alliance and UK Trade & Investment, the government department that offers specialist advice and support to British firms doing business abroad.

Dean says: "We were able to offer a series of private meetings to each participant, using secure connections. The meetings took place over a two-day period at times to suit those involved and, judging by the response so far, the idea has proved popular at home and abroad.

"Participants can do everything in one of these meetings other than shake hands. No doubt if they reach the point where they want to close a deal, one or the other will be much happier to make the trip, knowing that a contract signing awaits them and so the journey is an investment rather than an expense."

More information:

<http://www.aerospaceopportunities10.co.uk>

Check out [www.btob.co.uk](http://www.btob.co.uk) for future international events, both in the UK and overseas.

## Construction and engineering careers on offer in west London

HEATHROW Airport is back in the news as the argument over a third runway rumbles on – this time in the High Court.

Lord Justice Carnwath has ruled that the public consultation process was invalid as it was based on out-of-date figures. His decision does not rule out a third runway but calls for a review of government policy.

The government supports the expansion, while the other two major political parties are against it, as are local authorities in the immediate vicinity and some further afield who fear they will be affected by more noise from extra aircraft movements.

Whatever the final outcome of the tussle, which may yet be determined by the forthcoming General Election, Heathrow Airport will continue to be a major west London employer for the foreseeable future.

Even without expansion, it is the world's second busiest airport and the busiest in the European Union. It has 90 airlines serving 170 destinations and between them carrying 67 million passengers a year; 3.5 million of them to New York alone.

So it is appropriate that BtoB should be working with BAA, the airport operator, to run an annual Apprentice Fair. And it is encouraging to see that this year's event was well attended by employers and attracted more than 500 students in a single day.

BtoB's Tim Gordon says: "We were delighted with the range of employers who took part in the fair, the number of students who attended and also with the quality of the jobs on offer.

"Many of the firms are involved in construction or engineering and the work they do at the airport is leading edge, so the training on offer to their apprentices is going to be the best.

"The prospect of a formal apprenticeship leading to a well-paid, interesting and secure job close to home is very attractive – last year's fair led to about 80 appointments and we are hoping for an increase in that number this year.

"The employers and schools are happy with the arrangements and we are already talking about broadening the scope of the fair next year to include employers in neighbouring boroughs outside the airport and an increased number of schools."

More information:

[www.apprenticeshipfair.co.uk](http://www.apprenticeshipfair.co.uk)

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## Green initiative will keep council tax rises to a minimum

PUBLIC sector bodies in Britain spend more than £220 billion a year on goods and services. That gives them the purchasing power to influence suppliers for the wider benefit of the economy and the environment.

Buying 'green' is a main priority for UK Government. It addresses issues such as waste disposal, water consumption and carbon emissions. The Government argues that sustainability cuts costs – energy-efficient products reduce bills; they also cut carbon emissions, saving even more money.

Defra has supported the development of a Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) training programme for Local Government, working with the Marrakech Taskforce Force (MTF). BtoB's operations partner Action Sustainability is currently delivering these training courses to local authorities across the country.

The course is split into three modules – module 1 is an introduction to sustainable public procurement principles and prioritisation, and modules 2 and 3 help delegates apply the learning from module 1 to the procurement cycle.

The courses aim to embed sustainability principles into public sector procurement and to highlight the Government's target that 50 per cent of all tendering should be 'green compliant' by the end of 2010.

The target is part of a European Union Green Public Procurement (GPP) initiative, designed to encourage the public sector to take account of 'green' factors when buying goods and services. The aim is to improve the environmental performance and increase demand for more sustainable production.

GPP allows an authority to take account of environmental elements at all stages of a project and throughout the life cycle of goods. That gives it a way to demonstrate how it is meeting its carbon reduction commitments and other requirements to reduce its impact on the environment.

And GPP is EU-wide, which means that competition for goods and services is not distorted by member states adopting different criteria. Standards that apply across the EU offer incentives for European industry to invest in new technology that will ultimately improve its competitiveness.

More information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm)

<http://www.actionsustainability.com/news/103/How-green-is-Public-Procurement-in-the-EU>

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