

## Council tips for local suppliers

### HDC advises on contract opportunities

THE need for Huntingdonshire suppliers to win contracts with their district council and other public bodies in the area is set to be a major theme of a key meeting early next year.

Business leaders have for years been pressing HDC to favour local companies over suppliers from elsewhere when it procures goods and services.

And, at the first of the district council's 2009 business breakfasts, probably in late January, HDC is expected to spell out how suppliers can be more successful in winning council contracts.

In common with all public sector organisations, HDC has a duty to provide best possible value to its paymasters, particularly Council Tax payers, and cannot discriminate in

favour of local suppliers.

But senior officials are thought to believe it would be consistent with its new environmental strategy to make that discrimination when bids from a local supplier and a remote one are broadly similar financially – because of lower pollution levels generated by local deliveries.

In the meantime, more than 70 Huntingdonshire companies were attracted to a district council "buyer-meets-supplier" event at which they had one-to-one meetings with public sector and quasi-public sector organisations.

Most sectors of the business community, covering both service and manufacturing organisations, were represented. They were also treated to a 'master class' on how to win public sector contracts which offered practical advice, support and useful tips from an industry expert, the council said.

The event was part of the drive by HDC's economic development department to encourage local procurement and ensure Huntingdonshire businesses are made aware of the opportunities available within the public sector.

Council procurement manager Nigel Arkle said: "Within the district we are keen to ensure we offer small and medium enterprises the best possible opportunity to compete for work. It is events such as these and advice and information provided on our website that demonstrate our commitment to this process."

Sharon Grant, social landlord Luminus Group's procurement manager, added: "Not only was I made aware of a range of new local organisations spanning a range of sectors, but four or five were of immediate interest and will be encouraged to contact us when appropriate contracts are put out to tender."

## CRACKING THE CRUNCH The firms that are bucking the trend

### Just give him some space!

JUST when others are thinking of retrenching, Buckden businessman Malcolm Colman, pictured, has set up on his own account successfully selling and hiring out portable buildings.

When his former employers moved off the site on the A1 from which they had operated a similar business, it was too good an opportunity to miss, he told *The Hunts Post*.

"I'm not doing too badly at all. We're not getting much demand from the building trade for obvious reasons, but there's a lot of interest from private individuals and others," he said.

"One client wanted a unit for overwintering horses, and a hotel needed extra canteen space for its staff. And farmers are buying them for a variety of purposes."

Mr Colman, who was operations director with A1 Accommodation for 20 years previously, launched Maxispace in September. After just two months' trading it was too soon to try to predict his first year's turnover, "but we're doing all right". "Organisations need quick, cheaper and sometimes temporary options more now than in times of plenty; and we can help them get the space they need without having to wait for



builders – and at a lower cost. We sold the first portable building within days of beginning the business. "It's good to be able to help people and there's a lot of need for temporary office space and storage. "We've got great suppliers who ensure the high standards we expect and can really provide a portable building to anyone's specification, complying with all current regulations too," he added. "I just happened to be in the right place at the right time."

**INFORMATION:** Maxispace is at Great North Road, Buckden PE19 5UL; telephone 07777 670856.

## Family law expert joins the team at Copleys Solicitors

THE family department at Copleys Solicitors in St Ives is looking forward to welcoming solicitor, Paula Hamilton who will join the team on the January 5.

Ms Hamilton has practiced in the area for the past 15 years and has, during that time, built up a considerable following as a result of her experience and expertise within the field of family law in general and in particular on financial claims within divorce.

Lucy Arden, a partner, and head of the family department at Copleys said: "Paula is a highly respected family practitioner and we are very much looking forward to her joining us. On a personal level, I have known her for many years and we have opposed each other on many cases. Her grasp of family problems and attention to detail is second to none.

"She will be a valuable acquisition to our family department, which, over the past few years has expanded rapidly and continues to grow. We have a large team of family practitioners in St Ives and Huntingdon and we are able to offer specialist advice on every aspect of family law including divorce, children, domestic violence, financial applications and care work.

As a practice, we are firmly committed to the provision of legal services funded by the Legal Services Commission (previously known as Legal Aid) and we have invested heavily in the personnel and technology to ensure a prompt and reliable service without losing

### ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

the personal touch. This, also, at a time when many local firms have opted out of public funding work leaving potential clients with far less choice when instructing a solicitor for the first time".

Ms Hamilton said: "The year 2008 has been a pretty exciting year. Following the birth of my son Noah in September, I decided that when I returned from maternity leave after many years with the same firm that it was time to move on and develop my career.

"I decided to specialise in family law when I qualified over 14 years ago and I have subsequently obtained accreditation as a Law Society family lawyer, resolution specialist and a collaborative lawyer.

"Copleys is a firm with a long solid history having been established for over 100 years but with an eye on the future. The family department has an excellent reputation among other lawyers which says a lot.

"However, the best recommendation is of course a satisfied and happy client who recommends you and your firm to their friends and family. I'm looking forward to returning to work in January and continuing to offer this level of service to clients in St Ives and the surrounding areas."

**INFORMATION:** Contact Copleys in St Ives at Red House, 10 Market Hill, St Ives, Huntingdon Cambs. PE28 5AW. Telephone: 01480 464515.



NEW RECRUIT: Paula Hamilton. Picture: SUPPLIED.