

PM announces skills initiatives to regenerate Thames Gateway Olympic site to be a National Skills Academy for Construction

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The Prime Minister Gordon Brown has said that raising skills levels across the Thames Gateway will be vital to ensuring the success of the regeneration project. Gordon Brown was speaking to delegates at the Thames Gateway Forum. He also revealed that the Olympic site in East London will become a site for the National Skills Academy for Construction. He listed a number of skills initiatives led by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which will ensure that local people in the Gateway area get the skills they need to gain employment.

In total over £9 billion will be spent on the Thames Gateway between now and 2011. This is Europe's largest regeneration project and the money will be invested to secure jobs, better education, transport schemes and affordable homes. Talking about the skills required to support the scheme, the Prime Minister said:

"In the Thames Gateway - where there are 190,000 people of working age who are not in a job or in education - there is a real opportunity to be at the cutting edge of skills and welfare policy.

"Because we know that there is no point in creating new jobs if there are no skilled workers to fill them, the LSC has developed a Thames Gateway Skills Plan to help local people develop the skills needed to fill the new jobs on offer.

"£1.6 billion will be invested in teaching and learning and £850 million in building new further education facilities.

“The Creative Way lifelong learning network will generate hundreds of extra student places for local residents with vocational qualifications.

“And to provide specialist training for local people to fill jobs at the Olympic Park, I can announce today that the Olympic site will become a National Skills Academy for Construction.

“Full details will be set out in January but the Academy will provide at least 1,000 job placements for people enrolled on local FE construction courses, 1,000 other training placements for local people, and more than 500 Apprenticeship places. It will also help local residents get jobs on site --- meeting our aim that 10 to 15 per cent of the Olympic Park construction workforce come from the five local boroughs.

“Together this represents an unprecedented effort to give the residents of the Thames Gateway new opportunities to move into work, improve their skills in the workplace and progress into higher paid jobs -- with in total 13,500 Apprenticeships and at least 10,000 college places for local people across the whole Gateway area”.

David Hughes, the LSC’s Regional Director for London said:

“The Thames Gateway regeneration project and the 2012 Olympic Games have provided us with an unparalleled opportunity to raise skills levels and aspirations across London. These projects are not just about economics, they’re about changing people’s lives and equipping them with the skills they need to get better jobs.

“We are delighted the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) has committed to the Olympic park becoming a site for the National Skills Academy for Construction. It’s vital that we ensure that construction workers on the site have accredited qualifications and that we develop the skills of local people so that they can benefit from new jobs that will become available in the area.

“The LSC is also investing record amounts in revitalising the FE estate across the Thames Gateway to ensure that learning is delivered in state-of-the art facilities. This is all part of our goal to raise the skills of England’s young people and adults to world-class standards”.

The National Skills Academy will provide a range of specialist skills and training for local people on the Olympics site, providing workers with accredited qualifications in skills including scaffolding, steel erecting and plant operations. It is part of a £90 million NSA network launched by the Government to improve productivity in the UK and tackle skills shortages. The academies are employer-led world-class centres of excellence that deliver skills in specific sectors.

The National Skills Academy site on the Olympic park will be delivered by a training partnership between the LSC, the ODA, ConstructionSkills, the London Development Agency and the 5 Olympic boroughs. The LSC is responsible for funding post 16 education and training with the exception of higher education and spends over £1 billion in London each year to raise skills levels.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

This press release applies to England only

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. It is responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. It has a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Its vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. It works nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

www.lsc.gov.uk/london

National Skills Academies

For more information on National Skills Academies go to: <http://www.nationalskillsacademy.gov.uk/>

- Twelve NSA’s in key sectors will be open by the end of 2008 in England in sectors including Construction, Manufacturing, Financial Services, Food & Drink, Nuclear and Fashion Retail.

- Training is offered on-site, online, at dedicated skills academy colleges, and through existing training providers depending on industry needs.

Thames Gateway Skills Plan

The LSC is in the process of producing a Thames Gateway Skills Plan for London which will provide more detail on its investment in the Thames Gateway learning and skills infrastructure. The report is due to be published in January 2008 and will be available online at:

www.lsc.gov.uk/london

The seven priorities of the plan will be to provide:

- Local community access to skills, qualifications and jobs for the future
- Opportunities to progress onto higher level skills and jobs
- Clear and flexible career paths for young people and adults in all sectors of opportunity
- 21st Century buildings for 21st Century skills
- The right providers in the right locations to meet the needs of employers and local communities
- A successful 2012 Olympic Games and a legacy that inspires a generation and delivers sustainable benefit to local employers and communities
- A flexible offer for investing employers and new businesses to create sustainable economic growth and prosperity

Thames Gateway and Jobs

- In total, 225,000 new jobs will be created in the Thames Gateway by 2016 and there will be a major expansion in the economic opportunities available over the next two years, particularly for young people.
- At peak production, the Olympic Park will employ around 10,000 construction workers, and the neighbouring Stratford City development and Thames Gateway will bring this up to 20,000 by summer 2009 to Autumn 2010. In order to achieve and sustain this level of growth in the London economy it has been projected that the Industry needs to recruit from 2007-2011 an average of 12,880 construction workers per year.
- There are significant skills shortages in the construction sector particularly in specialist skills like plant operatives and mechanics. In addition employers need more and more of their workers to be trained at a Level 3 qualification (equivalent to two A levels).

LSC and Olympic Skills

The LSC is committed to a yearly pan London Olympics budget of £5 million per year between now and 2012, which will focus on expanding the range and quality of work-based learning provision and Apprenticeships in four key sectors: construction, sport, customer service and media skills:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/London/News/Pressreleases/Skills-boost-for-2012-Games.htm>

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