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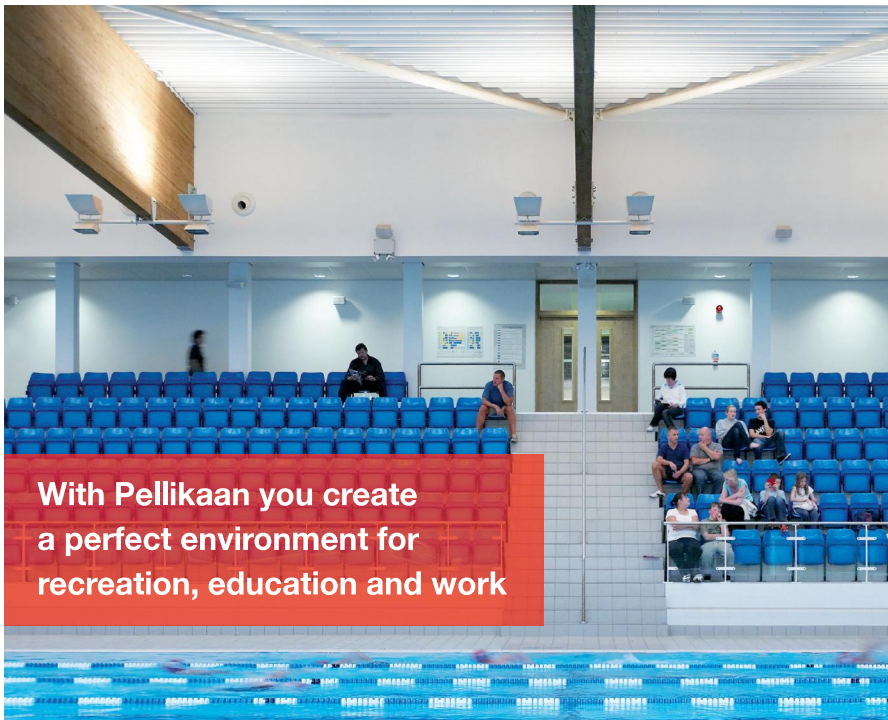
Contractor's efforts to keep up to date with technology are rewarded

vol11 issue7

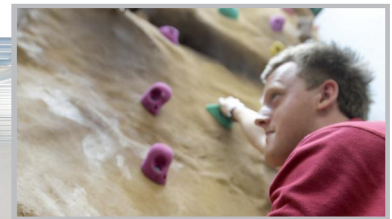
Leisure centre project on track

Work is well on track on the new £12.5 million West Bromwich Leisure Centre with the steel structure now in place. Facilities in the new centre will include a 25m pool, learner pool, sauna and steam room, four-court sports hall, 100-station fitness suite, two dance studios/activity rooms, indoor children's adventure play centre and cafe.





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The new centre, on the corner of Barton Street and Moore Street, is set to open in late spring 2014.

In addition to offering a range of sports and fitness classes for all ages and abilities, the centre will benefit Future Skills Sandwell students by providing training and employment opportunities.

DC Leisure has been appointed by Sandwell Council to design, build and operate the leisure leisure centre and swimming pool in West Bromwich. They are working in partnership with Pellikaan Construction.

A special time capsule was buried on the site when work first started on the site. It contained a snapshot of life in 2013 and was buried by two Future Skills Sandwell apprentices. The capsule contained West Bromwich Albion memorabilia, local newspapers, information about the area's regeneration and even an Argos catalogue to show future generations the gadgets and gizmos available in 2013.

Sandwell deputy leader Councillor Steve Eling said, "With doom and gloom in the headlines, coming into West Bromwich and seeing fantastic regeneration and redevelopment work under way creates a really positive feeling."

"We are proud of the new opportunities planned for our young people and are confident that we are helping to grow a skilled and employable workforce."

The build has been a success for Sandwell's Think Local youth employment team who have now made arrangements for local young people to gain extensive work experience shadowing full-time workers carrying out the project.

Peter Kirkham, Development Director at DC Leisure, said, "We are looking forward to continuing to work with Sandwell Council to encourage increased participation in physical activity and sport through a varied and exciting mix of programmes and facilities."

Sandwell Council architects have won a prestigious national Green Apple environment award for their multi-million pound refurbishment project carried out at a Wednesbury tower block.

Russell House in Holyhead Road has undergone a £2.8 million upgrade with improvements including a new insulated cladding system, new windows and balcony panels and a new glazed front entrance.

Completed last summer, other facelift work includes decoration to communal areas, lift refurbishment, fire stopping and fire doors, refuse-chute replacement, improvements to car parking areas and an improved parking scheme.

Councillor Maria Crompton, Sandwell Council's cabinet member for highways and environment, said: "This is a fantastic achievement for everybody involved in the project - the council's urban design and housing investment teams, Wates Living Space and, of course, the tenants of Russell House.

"There were more than 200 nominations so we have beaten off strong competition to win the award and it comes only weeks, after the same project was a finalist in the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors' regional awards for a refurbishment scheme."

Councillor Ian Jones, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Economy said, "We worked very closely tenants and ward councillors on the specification and the delivery of the improvements to Russell House to ensure they were of an extremely high standard. The quality of the finish of the block has now been recognised through the achievement of this prestigious award."

A trophy and certificate was presented by Doreen Lawrence - successful campaigning mother of murder victim Stephen Lawrence, who was training to be an architect - at the awards ceremony at the National Self Build and Renovation Centre, Swindon.

The Green Apple awards for the Built Environment and Architectural Heritage aim to find Britain's greenest companies, councils and communities.

The Green Apple awards are organised by the Green Organisation, an independent, non-political, non-activist, non-profit environmental group dedicated to recognising, rewarding and promoting environmental best practice around the world.

The awards are recognised by the Environment Agency, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Chartered Institute for Waste Management.

At the beginning of June Sandwell deputy leader Councillor Mahboob Hussain officially opened the borough's new special library services office following a £200,000 refurbishment.

The building was formally the Harvest Road Day Centre which has relocated to another site.

Special Library Services were previously based in Crosswells Road, Langley and look after the mobile library service and the early years library service.

Councillor Hussain said, "The new premises have up-to-date facilities that are necessary for these vital services to operate efficiently for residents and children in the borough."

Councillor Hussain said the council was having to make big cutbacks but this showed the commitment to protect frontline services for the young and old.