

# Fuelling need for legal services

A YEAR ago I wrote about how Sheffield was starting to undergo a renaissance. That tour de force continues apace.

The local economy is on the up. Everywhere you look new buildings are on the up. In fact it's one of the fastest-growing economies in the country.

Sheffield is no longer struggling with the image of an old-fashioned manufacturing town. The city is reinventing itself, attracting new and large business which in turn has fuelled a greater demand for legal services.

It has been another year of growth for our firm.

Our clients now cover a wide range of industries from large engineering companies to newer IT and biotech companies as the economy has diversified.

More and more banks have increased their commercial operations in the city, which shows a huge confidence in the area to lend money, to compete against other financial institutions and help businesses flourish.

*Businesses continue to invest and expand in Sheffield and the city's vibrant legal community is no different. Paul Firth, managing office partner at DLA Piper, which recently swept the board in the Legal 500 awards, looks at how the city is reacting to a greater demand for legal services*



And our expertise has expanded to meet those demands. We were delighted to welcome Tim Littler, who moved from Leeds to direct the growth of our banking team.

We have enjoyed a record year in the corporate market, with the Yorkshire team involved in some of the region's biggest deals including Youngs

Bluecrest, Little Chef and Sheffield Forgemasters deals. Working on deals such as this has confirmed our position as the legal heavyweight in South Yorkshire.

The office took first place for its work in every commercial discipline – corporate and commercial practice, commercial litigation, employment

and commercial property – in the Legal 500 Review 2006.

And for the first time our white collar criminal fraud team, headed by Gary Gallen, was ranked the best in the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

Our experienced and specialised lawyers, our ability to handle complex contentious issues, a swathe of panel appointments, impressive client list and breadth of instructions means the Sheffield office of DLA Piper is now recognised as the most commanding legal services provider in the region by a margin.

International deals including the Hutchison China MediTech Limited AIM flotation led by Jon Kenworthy continue to bring the business world closer to Yorkshire companies and attract the highest calibre of staff to the region.

DLA Piper regards Sheffield as an important and developing business centre. Although we are a relatively small part of DLA Piper's worldwide presence, we are viewed as an increas-

ingly important cog in our global, international and national market and we have now become the main administrative centre for operations in the UK.

As a firm, our commitment to Sheffield and the Yorkshire region has been highlighted by the investment in the new Sheffield office at 1 St Paul's Place in the Heart of The City project – the highest specification building ever built in the city.

The new HQ offers a far better working environment for staff and for clients and reflects our continued growth and our increased ability to be able to deliver legal services to our Yorkshire clients, both here and throughout the world.

Global board member and UN peace prize winner Senator George J Mitchell opened the building for us earlier this year.

He was hugely impressed by both the city, its people and the urgency of change in the city – as was our latest official visitor The Duke of York.

## Getting the most out of 2012 Olympic dream

SINCE London was awarded the Olympic and Paralympic Games for 2012 Sheffield has been looking to maximise the benefits from all angles, including sport, social and business opportunities.

I have been given the task to take the lead in exploiting the city's superb sporting event management skills and experience to help ensure that Sheffield makes the most of the 2012 Games.

As part of my remit I report to Sheffield 2012 Steering Group and one of my key priorities is to make sure the city reaches its potential and to help inspire a new generation of young people to make sport a central part of their lives.

We as a Steering Group have identified various strands of opportunity associated with the 2012 Games – development of sports participation in Sheffield, the staging of major events, the hosting of international training camps, progressing sports business opportunities, athlete development and elite programmes and tourism benefits.

Key players from across South Yorkshire including representatives from the Sheffield City Council, South Yorkshire Local Authorities, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield International Venues, SportsPulse, Sheffield First for Investment, Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry, South Yorkshire Destination Management Partnerships, Sport England Yorkshire, Yorkshire Forward and the Regional Sports Board make up the group.



*Wayne Coyle, Sheffield's Director of Olympic and Paralympic Strategy, looks to the opportunities that Sheffield can gain in the run-up to London 2012 and beyond*

And we have already been successful in our remit. Ahead of London 2012 Sheffield has become the training HQ for the GB men's and women's volleyball squad, home to the Amateur Boxing Association of England and was used as a training camp for the Saudi Arabia wheelchair team in preparation for the Gulf Games in autumn.

We are keen for South Yorkshire businesses to register for tender opportunities for London 2012. Contracts for the London games are already up for grabs from both the Olympic Delivery Authority and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games.

Sheffield was the first destination in Yorkshire to host the London 2012 Roadshow when it toured the country this summer and we were proud to showcase its facilities and

young sports stars to LOCOG members.

The eyes of the world will be on England in the build-up to London 2012 and hosting teams and training camps will not only generate significant economic benefit but will also provide a major opportunity to profile the city and South Yorkshire region through the extensive media coverage which will accompany the individuals from this area and teams as they prepare for the Olympics and Paralympics.

The Games are an extremely useful tool for change and for teaching future generations about the importance of sport. We will continue to ensure Sheffield is taking advantage of the opportunities that the Games will bring – opportunities that we hope will leave a lasting sporting, social and economic legacy for the city.

## Relationship driven legal services

Established in South Yorkshire, we can now be found in over 60 cities throughout the UK, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the US.

We can provide local legal expertise delivered on an international scale.

Doing business for South Yorkshire, wherever South Yorkshire does business.

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