

**SOUTHERN WILTSHIRE AREA BOARD
(06 October 2011)**

A Focus on Local Employment

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To update the Board on the outcome of our consultation with 3 business parks in Southern Wiltshire.
- 1.2. To update the Board on the next steps with regard to our Focus Group with Small Businesses.
- 1.3. To release funding to pay for 3 jobs boards in Downton, Old Sarum and Whaddon.
- 1.4. To approve retrospective spending on Jobs Clubs.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Southern Wiltshire Area Board wanted to initiate projects in the community area which meet local needs and respond to local challenges.
- 2.2. In order to find out what areas it should work on the Board held a consultation exercise at its meeting on 7 April 2011 and also administered an electronic survey asking the same questions to our community area network.
- 2.3. A significant majority of respondents felt the Area Board should take up one of these issues. **Local employment** emerged very clearly as the topic people would wish to see tackled at a local level.
- 2.4. At its meeting on 23 June 2011 the Area Board set aside 10% of its budget to fund initiatives focusing on local employment. It also delegated spending up to £250 on costs incurred to get these initiatives off the ground.
- 2.5. The Board has been working on 3 main initiatives:
 - Local Vacancies for Local People
 - Support for Small Businesses
 - Setting up local Job Clubs

3. Local Vacancies for Local People: Consultation Results

3.1. A very short questionnaire, comprising of 6 yes or no questions was circulated around business parks in Downton, Old Sarum and Whaddon. Businesses could respond in a number of ways. To try to improve the response rate we attached freepost envelopes to each consultation document.

3.2. Total response: Downton 19, Old Sarum 13, Whaddon 8

3.3. The responses, as of 26/9/2011 (closing date 30/9/2011) can be summarised as followed (the percentage represents the proportion of respondents who answered **yes** to the questions):

QUESTIONS	Downton (19)	Old Sarum (13)	Whaddon (8)
Q1. We would display vacancies on a jobs board near the business park...	74%	77%	88%
Q2. We would like to find out more about how this would work...	63%	77%	75%
Q3. We would like to contribute to a job club in our area	21%	23%	38%
Q4. We would like to know more about job clubs and how they operate	37%	77%	38%
Q5. We would offer work experience placements to local people	47%	62%	63%
Q6. We would like to receive the Southern Wiltshire Area Board e-newsletter which is sent about 6 times a year	58%	100%	88%
OUTCOMES			
Jobs Boards	Proceed	Proceed	Proceed (smaller board)

3.4. The Community Area Manager has sought a quotation from a local supplier in Old Sarum for 3 identical notice boards, including installation for £2,200. However, the idea of a technological solution is also being explored. Also smaller notice boards could be sourced for Whaddon where there are fewer businesses. We will go back to the supplier for a more detailed quote once we have finalised the consultation.

4. Support for small businesses in Southern Wiltshire: Consultation Results

4.1. So far we have had 19 respondents to our survey inviting expressions of interest for attending a focus group. Of that 19, only 13 were valid responses

as 6 did not leave their contact details.

- 4.2. 9 people are willing to take part in a focus group so far and we will hold this in the early evening in November. The date and venue is yet to be decided. We will open the invite to all small businesses again once a date is set. The table below summarises the results:

QUESTIONS	Total answering yes, out of 13.
Q1. We are a small business and would like to get involved in the focus group...	9
Q2. We prefer to attend a focus group in:	Evening (6)
Q3. We are interested in the idea of enterprise clubs...	11
Q4. We could offer our experiences and expertise to an enterprise club	8
Q5. We would like to receive the Southern Wiltshire Area Board e-newsletter which is sent about 6 times a year	6

5. Job Club Development

5.1. A job club has been held at Old Sarum Community Room where there were 3 attendees the next one will be on 21 October 2011. Downton Job Club starts on 11 October 2011 and will take place every second Tuesday of the month until Christmas.

5.2. The idea is to get local people to run these clubs so the sessions leading up to January 2012 will help us to establish them and to see if they are sustainable.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

As per the recommendations

6.2. Legal Implications

There are none.

6.3. Equality and Diversity Implications

There are none.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Board funds the installation of 3 jobs boards at the 3 sites in the report up to a maximum of £3,500. The exact location, size of boards and process for displaying vacancies is to be determined locally and the Community Area Manager will work with all stakeholders to arrive at an agreed way forward. If a technological solution is preferred in a specific location then the Board will consider granting extra funds on 15 December 2011.
2. The Board sets aside up to £100 to hold a focus group which is to be held at an agreed location. The outcomes of the focus group are to be brought back to the next available Area Board.
3. The Area Board acknowledges the £125 spent on 4 Job Club sessions at Old Sarum.

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