

Corsham Chamber of Commerce

Partnership report to Corsham Area Board meeting 13th October 2009

New Businesses

The Wiltshire Council and Wessex Chambers of Commerce annual new business competition has now closed. About 80 valid entries will be judged in October and the overall winners for the County will be announced at Bowood on 20th November. Local Area winners will be announced beforehand.

North Wiltshire Economic Partnership

This has now been formed from the previous North Wiltshire Economic Consultative Group. Work is progressing towards approval of an updated strategy for economic development in an area that covers Cricklade to Corsham and Box to Marlborough.

The business community is widely represented.

Key strategic themes are:

- Employment Land
- Training and Skills
- Housing
- Transport

A key employment sector that the group is keen to see developed further is **Tourism** as it represents a rare growth opportunity in harder economic times. Four out of the seven N Wilts Chambers of Commerce see this as a high priority.

Corsham Chamber is pleased to note that the local Tourist Information & Heritage Centre has directly booked over £9,000 of B&B accommodation from January to September 2009, about 30% above 2008 levels. This will have had a similar value of associated benefit for local catering establishments, transport and shops.

Basil Hill/Spring Quarry

Regarding the site developments and associated transport/highways infrastructure, the Corsham Chamber is pleased to see that the traffic counts are being updated around the sites. The Chamber is not in favour of the primary access routes being along Park Lane and Leafy Lane and therefore is against the approved plan for sets of traffic lights at Pickwick Road/A4, Park Lane/A4 and leafy Lane/A4. The Chamber supports the provision of quality employment as an investment in the future of Corsham over the next 20 years.

Changes in Planning Application policy regarding listed buildings

The Chambers would like to know:

Is it correct that, under the new Unitary Authority, planning permission affecting listed buildings is fully devolved to Council Officers without the opportunity for being heard at a planning committee meeting (or equivalent) – other than for full planning consent?

Promotion of Corsham

The Chamber is working on a promotional campaign for Corsham's retail offering and to this end has negotiated advertising rates at a lower cost than individual businesses can access.