

ACTION FOR WILTSHIRE



Wiltshire Assembly update bulletin – August 2009

Background to Action for Wiltshire

A report was produced by George Bright for the Wiltshire Assembly to research the effects of the recession in Wiltshire. A number of actions were proposed in the report and the 'Action for Wiltshire' programme is taking this forward. To see the report please click [here](#)

Progress so far

The Wiltshire Public Service Board (WPSB) and the Wiltshire Coordinating Group (WCG), along with other key partners and organisations, have been consulted on the action plan in the report and have been tasked to consider any extra action that needs to be taken to effectively tackle the recession.

- *A **steering group** has been established to ensure effective action is being taken. It includes reps from the voluntary sector, the business sector and the council, as well as John Wraw as Chair of the Assembly. The Group meets on a regular basis to decide the next top priorities and ensure that the actions in the report are being taken forward.*

Implementation Executive decisions

The Implementation Executive of Wiltshire Council met on the 13th of May and decided that a sum of £1m from the Performance Reward Grant recently awarded to the Council should be set aside to support some initiatives to combat the recession over the next 18 months.

a. Business Support Service

£50,000 has been set aside to fund a free emergency support service. Small businesses in Wiltshire with less than 50 employees can telephone for free, immediate, professional support and advice during a business crisis.

Wiltshire business in crisis helpline - 01225 718222

b. Citizens' Advice Bureau

A total of £288,000 has been allocated to the Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau because of the big increase in calls as a result of the recession. This will enable the bureaux to answer an extra 200 calls each week across the county.

The phone line will be launched during September so look out for more details.

c. ***The 'potential' programme for young people***

The 'potential' programme aims to provide a coherent range of options for young people in Wiltshire, be that in employment, education or training. In the past month lots of things have been getting underway to support young people;

New this month ...

Graduate careers workshops

Careers workshops for graduates are being rolled out across the county. The workshops are being run by Bath Spa University and Bath University and will include advice and support on how to compete effectively in a narrow job market, and to be able to present their skills and experiences most effectively as more jobs become available as the economy recovers.

The first workshops are in September with more scheduled for early October due to high demand.

Mentoring programme for NEETs

Young people who are not in employment, education or training are now able to benefit from having a senior member of staff within Wiltshire Council as their mentor. This arrangement will enable both the young people and the staff members to learn from each other and support and inspire the young person.

This programme will be put in place during the autumn.

Work experience programme for NEETs

Young people who are not in employment, education or training will be able to benefit from work experience opportunities across the county. This will enable them to experience different professions and careers in order to support them in gaining employment or entering education or training in their chosen field.

There will be more news on this project over the coming months.

d. ***Benefit take-up campaign***

A benefit take-up campaign will be launched across the county over the autumn. It is crucial that people are encouraged to take up the benefits to which they are entitled at an early stage when they have lost their job or been made redundant, and that they receive sufficient support to navigate through the system, which is incredibly complex.

By encouraging more people to seek advice, financial hardship will be reduced which can result in the loss of their home, health and relationship problems.

There will be more news on this project next month.

Next top priorities ...

1. To provide advice and support people and businesses on energy efficiency and reducing their energy bills

The steering group will consider how it would be best to provide this support at their next meeting.

2. Research effective action to support rural businesses

A survey of Wiltshire's rural economy will be happening over the coming weeks to see what action can be best taken to support rural businesses.

3. Community Finance Initiatives will be considered and developed

A range of partners are meeting to consider how to develop and support community finance initiatives in the county in order to create a sustainable model of finance for people and business in Wiltshire.

4. Taking action to support retail businesses

Research is underway to look at what action could be taken to best support retailers in Wiltshire.

5. Improving the 'street scene'

Research is taking place to look at the 'street scene' of towns across the county to assess the effects of the recession on empty shops, graffiti and other problems caused in local areas. Examples of good practice in maintaining and promoting the 'street scene' of an area are being communicated to Area Boards.

6. Area boards taking action

Area boards across Wiltshire are being asked to consider actions that can be taken in their local area to support with the Action for Wiltshire programme or targets from the Local Agreement for Wiltshire.

What next?

The steering group will continue to meet on a regular basis and members of the Wiltshire Assembly will receive regular reports on the progress of the actions to enable all partners to support the people, communities and businesses of Wiltshire wherever possible.

What can you do?

Thank you to all individuals and organizations who replied following July's newsletter with ideas and offers of support for the programme.

Please get in touch and let us know if your organisation can provide support or resources for any of the actions being taken forward but you are not already involved, or if there are any actions not identified in the 'menu' that you think need to be taken forward.

Next month, more news on...

- Apprenticeships and the Future Jobs Fund – a scheme from central government to provide employment opportunities of 6 months for unemployed young people.
- Energy efficiency – measures to provide support and advice on cost effective ways for people to save energy.
- Benefit take-up campaign
- Status update on the recession in Wiltshire

Who to Contact

If you would like further information about the Action for Wiltshire programme or if you have any questions or comments please email ActionforWiltshirePMO@wiltshire.gov.uk or call Rachel Goff on 01225 713931.

More information? Previous newsletters?

For more information and previous newsletters please click here and follow the links to the Action for Wiltshire page.

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council/wiltshirefamilyofpartnershipsworkingtogether.htm>

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The logo for the Wiltshire Assembly Multiple Family of Partnerships is circular. It features a green map of Wiltshire in the center, surrounded by several colorful human figures in various colors (red, blue, yellow, green) holding hands. The text 'Wiltshire Assembly' is at the top and 'Multiple Family of Partnerships' is at the bottom of the circle.