

ACTION FOR WILTSHIRE



Wiltshire Assembly bulletin – October/November 2009

The Action for Wiltshire group was formed following a report to the Wiltshire Assembly in March 2009 that looked at the effects of the recession across the county. The report can be found [here](#).

What is Action for Wiltshire?

Action for Wiltshire is the people, businesses and communities of Wiltshire working together to tackle the effects of the recession in the county; and to prepare for the economic recovery, building a sustainable future for the county.

NEWSFLASH

Minister Jim Knight visits Wiltshire young people on the Future Jobs Fund

Jim Knight, Minister of State for Employment & Welfare Reform and Minister for the South West visited Wiltshire Council this week to see our progress with the Future Jobs Fund after recognition of the strength of Wiltshire's response to the Future Jobs Fund.

The Minister visited Wiltshire to meet Wiltshire Council's first employee employed through the Future Jobs Fund, Andrew Sprules who commenced work with the Economy & Enterprise service of Wiltshire Council on the 30th October. Andrew is working as a Mapping Assistant based in Rights of

Way undertaking key work for the Visit Wiltshire Tourism Partnership.



The Minister also met Selwood Housings' FJF employees, Amy Finlay who has taken a job as an admin support to the Money Matters service and Ben Green, employed as a Young Caretaker.

Meeting the young people gave the Minister a chance to really appreciate the range of jobs created and the breadth of the client group in Wiltshire, and also to see the real difference the programme is making to their lives.



The partners on the Action for Wiltshire group updated the Minister of the significant work that has been undertaken by the Wiltshire Assembly in the broader Action for Wiltshire programme and the positive impact the work is having on local communities.



This included advising him of how we are planning for recovery in Wiltshire and meeting with the local Citizens Advice Bureau to hear the impact of the extra support the CAB has received via Action for Wiltshire to enhance its capacity to deal with the significant increase in demand for the service.

New this month ...

Wiltshire Assembly website launched

The new Wiltshire Assembly website was launched at the last meeting on the 30th of October. If you would like information on the Wiltshire Assembly or would like more information on Action for Wiltshire visit the new website [here](#)

Wiltshire Assembly meeting and Housing conference

At the housing conference in October partner organisations and individuals including RSLs, Councillors, tenant representatives participated in workshops to get updates on the Action for Wiltshire programme and to discuss what is needed for the future of Wiltshire for long term sustainability and resilient communities

Partners who are involved in Action for Wiltshire updated Wiltshire Assembly members of the programme of the programme over the past 6 months. The CAB and Wiltshire College updated the Assembly on the CAB advice line, the benefit take up campaign, and the 'potential' programme for young people. The Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership also provided an update on the focus on the programme— More on this below.

To see how the programme is impacting on peoples lives to support them through the recession and in to recovery, including seeing young people on the Future Jobs Fund, please click [here](#).

Coming up ...

Action for Wiltshire Roadshows

Through the Action for Wiltshire campaign, real help is being provided for the people, businesses and communities of Wiltshire and the campaign is out on the streets again this month at road shows providing local people with on the spot specialist advice or putting them in touch with expert help.

[Click here](#) to visit the Heart fm website for updates on the roadshow dates and locations.

Progress on other projects

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.

As we move out of recession, businesses will grow at a fast moving rate and they will need young people with skills and Wiltshire will be prepared for this due to these initiatives that are being taken now, a positive move for the county.

- **Future Jobs Fund**

A successful partnership bid has secured just under £3m from the Department for Work and Pension's Future Jobs Fund. The money will support the creation of 450 additional or new temporary jobs across Wiltshire for 18-24 year olds who have been claiming Job Seekers Allowance for between 39 and 50 weeks and who otherwise would remain long-term unemployed.

The fund is supporting them with employment opportunities but is also developing them as assets for the Wiltshire economy. All the jobs created will deliver direct community benefit. Since the programme started in Wiltshire in October, 83 jobs have been created, 98 people referred for interviews, 21 jobs offers made and 13 young people have actually started work.

- **Apprenticeships**

In partnership with Wiltshire College, Wiltshire Council will be delivering a total of 66 apprenticeships for young people aged between 16 and 25 on behalf of the public sector across Wiltshire.

We will also help provide:

- Graduate careers workshops
- A mentoring programme for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs)
- A work experience programme for NEETs

Wiltshire business in crisis helpline

Small businesses in Wiltshire can telephone for free, immediate, professional support and advice to deal with a business crisis. Helpline 01225 718222.

CAB advice line

From the end of October all of the citizens advice bureaux branches in Wiltshire have been switched over to the new CAB advice line. The new advice line is enabling the Wiltshire bureaux to handle an extra 300 calls a week. Since September this has meant the bureaux have answered 75% of the calls made, an increase from 30-40% in May, and 70% of the callers were assisted at the initial point of contact, freeing up more advisor time in the bureaux for more face to face interviews for the more complex matters. The main enquiries to the advice line are around benefits and debt. Advice line 08443 752775.

Improving the 'street scene'

Town councils and area boards are considering projects to improve the 'street scene' in that area. For example this may be a project to enhance or to productively use empty shop fronts.

Benefit take-up campaign

The benefit take-up campaign is being rolled out across the county and the campaign will ensure that people facing unemployment or redundancy are aware of all the benefits they are entitled to and how to claim them, and also help maximise the income of vulnerable people by helping them to claim the correct benefits and cope with the increased cost of living.

Community Finance Initiative

A working group will research and develop a sustainable model of finance for the county, one that serves all of Wiltshire's communities, businesses and savers.

Area Action Force

Key partners (SWRDA, Job Centre Plus, Business Link and Local Economic Partnerships) are working to share local intelligence and coordinate a response to the economic downturn, for example when businesses are proposing redundancies.

Court Advice Desk

An advice desk at the county courts is being funded to help people who arrive at court to face possession proceedings but have no legal representation.

Mortgage Rescue Scheme

The scheme is helping vulnerable families stay in their homes. It is targeted at the most vulnerable households - the elderly, disabled and families with children - whose incomes are less than £60,000 a year and who would be eligible to be re-housed under the homelessness legislation.

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.

The future - out of recession and in to a strong recovery

The next priority for the Action for Wiltshire programme is to support research looking at what Wiltshire needs to recover strongly from the recession and to create a sustainable future.

At the Wiltshire Assembly meeting at the end of October Steve Stone, Chair of the Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership, rounded off the update by outlining where the economy needs to be for Wiltshire to make a strong recovery.

Key features to enable the economy to be supported, sustained and to grow over the coming years will be;

- A supply of suitably skilled people
- High quality and co-ordinated business advice services
- Adequate land for development and workspace
- Funding available for sound business plans
- Widespread access to high speed broadband

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