

PRESS RELEASE

10 July 2007

Website launched to keep the west working

A new website aimed at businesses and community leaders has been launched to help support the economy across the West of England.

West at Work has developed www.westatwork.co.uk to highlight how it can work with local employers and community organisations to make sure that people have the training and skills to meet local business needs.

The focus of West at Work is to make sure that skills are available locally in sectors such as Construction, Retail and Food and Drink to meet job opportunities resulting from major development sites in the area – such as Cabot Circus and Temple Quarter in Bristol, SouthGate in Bath, SPark (the Science Park) in South Gloucestershire and Locking Parklands and Weston Park in North Somerset.

The new website provides information for businesses, community organisations and others about how they can link in with West at Work and share the success that these large scale developments bring.

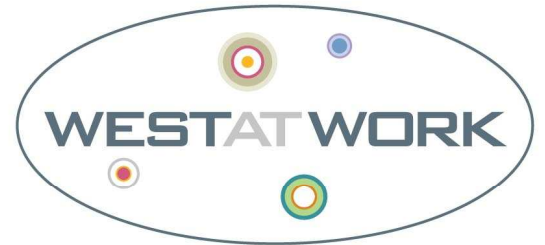
Ann O'Driscoll, West at Work Board Member and Enterprise Manager at the South West of England Regional Development Agency said: "More than £5 billion of investment will pour into new developments over the next 20 years. It is vital that investors can draw on a local workforce with the right skills and qualifications to operate on these large scale projects - either during the construction phase or once they are complete.

She continued: "This might mean local employers making sure they have a well trained workforce to work as sub contractors or local community groups encouraging people to gain skills that will enable them to access jobs in the future. The substantial investment that is coming into the area provides plenty of opportunities for both local people and smaller employers and we need to make sure that they can benefit and share in the success that such investment brings."

Matching skills to local development sites is vital as forecasts* suggest that total employment across the West of England will grow by 0.5% annually for the next ten years – an average annual growth of roughly 3,500. This is ahead of the 0.4% figure for the entire South West region.

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PRESS RELEASE

Continued

West at Work is a partnership between the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the South West of England Regional Development Agency (South West RDA), Jobcentre Plus, Business West, Connexions, Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council.

The partnership focuses on making sure that the local workforce can meet the skills needs of specific key development sites across the West of England. These key development sites are: Cabot Circus, Harbourside Phase 2, South Bristol and Temple Quarter in Bristol; the Southgate Centre, Bath Western Riverside and the Dyson Centre in Bath; SPark (the Science Park) in South Gloucestershire and Locking Parklands and Weston Park in North Somerset.

For more information about West at Work visit **www.westatwork.co.uk**

* Institute for Employment Research

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