



PRESS RELEASE

November 2007

West at Work hopes for a taste of sweet success

The Executive Chairman of the fine chocolate makers Elizabeth Shaw Ltd, is heading up a partnership project that helps local people gain the skills that employers need.

Malachy McReynolds has joined West at Work as the new Chair of its Programme Board.

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

The partnership aims to make sure that the local workforce has the skills needed to take advantage of the £5 billion of investment that will pour into the West of England over the next 20 years.

Major development sites such as Cabot Circus and Temple Quay in Bristol, SouthGate in Bath, the Science Park in South Gloucestershire and Locking Parklands in Weston-super-Mare will create numerous new jobs and opportunities for both businesses and local people. West at Work will help to ensure that employers are provided with the skilled local workforce needed to fill this demand.

Malachy who is a member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, agreed to become the new Chair after hearing about the partnership's aims. He said: "The remit of West at Work is vital because skills are crucial to securing growth in the local economy. Forecasts for the West of England are good, with 5,000 new jobs being created each year, but we need to ensure we can meet this demand by tackling the issue of worklessness for specific groups and areas of our community in the process. It would be galling if increased economic activity bypassed this rich seam of latent talent in our region."

He added: "I have spent a number of years working in Easton in Bristol and I know that local workforces in areas such as this have a great deal to offer, but we need to highlight the skills which are needed in our local area and to create the environment for businesses and individuals to develop those skills."

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Malachy held a number of senior financial posts in UK manufacturing companies before joining the confectionery industry in 1989. He was Managing Director of the Irish subsidiary of Finnish owned Leaf Group until 1993, when he moved to a corporate role in Amsterdam. In 1998 he was transferred to Leaf's UK subsidiary, as General Manager.

He is the current President of the BCCCA (Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Association) in the UK, and is also President of the European trade association for the biscuit and confectionery industry, CAOBISCO. He is the current Chair of the CBI's South West England Regional Council.

In March 2000 he led a management buyout, acquiring Leaf's UK chocolate interests, Elizabeth Shaw Ltd. In 2006, on the sale of Elizabeth Shaw to a group of Icelandic investors, he became Managing Director of the group's UK holding company, Noi Sirius UK.

West at Work Director, David Draycott said: "We are delighted to welcome Malachy as the new Chair of our Programme Board. There is rapid, high profile development across our region and we need to make sure that our local workforce can share in the success that this new investment offers. Malachy can help us achieve this as he has a wealth of experience and business acumen which I know will be of great benefit to the whole partnership."

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

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