



South Somerset District Council

SSDC4Business Newsletter

Keep up to date with all the latest information about local business matters and economic development projects in the South Somerset area.

Upcoming Events

26th April 2017

St Margaret's Hospice, Yeovil

**Wake up to Business
Networking Event**

[Learn More](#)



27th April 2017

Great Bow Wharf, Langport

Leadership Skills
Somerset Business Agency

[Learn More](#)

26th April 2017

Great Bow Wharf, Langport

Bagehot Business Breakfast

[Learn More](#)



4th May 2017

Yeovil College, Yeovil

**Reforms and Apprenticeship
Levy**

Advice for businesses

[Learn More](#)

17th May 2017
Yeovil Golf Club

**How to be a Mindful
Employer**
New Leaf Life Design

[Learn More](#)



18th May 2017
Yeovil Golf Club

Business Speed Networking
Yeovil Chamber of Commerce

[Learn More](#)



News

Devon and Somerset small businesses urged to take advantage of £1.75m fund to develop employees' skills

Small and medium sized enterprises across Devon and Somerset are being urged to take advantage of £1.75m of free skills training and support for their workforce available as part of a new programme which has launched this month.

Serco's Employment, Skills & Enterprise business has been selected by the Skills Funding Agency to manage the programme - named Heart of the South West Apprenticeship service - working in partnership with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The programme, which runs to July 2018 and is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the Skills Funding Agency, aims to support growth across all sectors of the region's economy by providing businesses, entirely free of charge, with:

- Recognised accredited qualifications and bespoke training courses aimed at enhancing employees' skills and helping them to progress into Apprenticeships. These will be delivered through a network of expert local training providers and include
- Support to enable employers to take advantage of Apprenticeship opportunities that work for each business.

Eligible businesses can benefit from training which is tailored to their specific needs. Fully-flexible training will take place at employees' workplace and businesses can select full qualifications or mix and match individual units that are directly relevant to their work. These can include technical skills training and higher level skills such as leadership and management. Previous programme participants have benefited from increased employee confidence, motivation and productivity and improved employee loyalty and retention.

As part of the programme employers can also benefit from a support, advice and brokerage service that will help employers to:

- * Decide which Apprenticeships are right for existing employees
- * Find a local Apprenticeship provider
- * Find out what Government Funding is available
- * Understand the implications of the Apprenticeship Levy to the business
- * Solve recruitment challenges by explaining the services available on recruiting new apprentices

Businesses can contact Serco on hotswapprenticeships@serco.com or 01752 968026 for more details and to find out if they are eligible for funded training and business support.

Bi-monthly Networking Event for Producers in South Somerset

A new bi-monthly networking group for local food and drink producers is coming to South Somerset, thanks to funding from Defra's (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Championing British Food Tourism scheme.

South Somerset District Council has arranged the networking group meetings after receiving a share of the Defra scheme grant. The funding will help to promote regional food and drink.

The next meeting will be at the newly refurbished Westlands Leisure Complex in Yeovil, on Tuesday 30th May between 10.00am and 12.00pm. There will be the opportunity to meet other local producers, network and receive free business support. Tina Paul from Serco will be speaking about apprenticeships and available funding for businesses and Anne-Marie Spalding from the Levels and Moors Local Action Group will be giving a presentation on LEADER funding opportunities.

Producers are advised to book a place on the networking group by calling 01935 462173. Future meetings will take place on Monday 24 July, Monday 25 September and Monday 27 November at the same times and location.

Councillor Jo Roundell Greene, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development at South Somerset District Council said, "We are delighted to be getting this first event underway, to give food and drink producers the chance to network and share their experiences, as well as learning about the business opportunities that exist both locally and on the wider stage.

"Along with our monthly food and drink markets, these groups will help to promote regional food and drink in South Somerset."

The networking group is part of a wider project of monthly food and drink

markets being held at the Cartgate Picnic Site on the fourth Saturday of every month between February and November 2017.

The project will build on the successful reputation of Somerset and create a positive impact for the local economy by growing the local supply chains, increasing the consumer audience and enhancing the profile of local food and drink.

Stands are still available at some of the markets. If local producers are interested in attending these free markets they can contact Rebecca O'Neill at South Somerset District Council on 01935 462173. Unfortunately, due to licensing rules, hot food, drink and alcohol are not permitted to be sold at the markets.

Help for Business Rates Payers

Councillors have used South Somerset District Council's (SSDC) discretionary powers to introduce a range of Business Rate Relief measures to help local businesses.

These discounts became available from 1 April 2017 when the new Valuation Rating List came into effect.

Two of the measures; increasing Mandatory Rural Rate Relief to 100% (for eligible ratepayers) and giving a local discount of £1,500 a year for Local Newspapers; were announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and by using the Council's discretionary powers it has been possible to introduce these measures immediately without waiting for legislation.

The Third measure being introduced is a 'better buy' award that increases discretionary Charity Relief to 100%, where the charity ratepayer would otherwise have qualified for 100% discount under the Small Business Rate Relief. Doing this overcomes the anomaly caused by regulations that apply Mandatory Charity Relief (previously at 80%) instead of Small Business Rates relief where the ratepayer qualifies for both.

Two further measures will be considered by SSDC's District Executive on the 6th April. These are the Supporting Small Businesses Relief and the Business

Rate Relief Scheme for Pubs, both announced in the Chancellor's Spring Budget and requiring the use of discretionary powers to introduce them ahead of legislation.

The Supporting Small Businesses Relief limits the effective increase in rates for up to five years where a ratepayer is losing some or all of their Small Business or Rural Rate Relief. The relief for pubs would see eligible pubs receiving £1000 for 2017/18 only.

EU General Data Protection Regulation: Are you ready?

Last month the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) released a consultation on their GDPR Consent Guidance. It provides more detailed, practical guidance for UK organisations and businesses on consent under the GDPR.

The GDPR sets a high standard for consent and means offering people genuine choice and control over how you use their data. It introduces the idea that consent must be granular and specific and specifically bans pre-ticked opt-in boxes. Additionally, organisations and businesses will be required to keep clear records to demonstrate consent.

The ICO are advising organisations and businesses to act now by reviewing existing consents and your consent mechanisms to check they meet the GDPR standard. If they do not meet the standards, you will need to obtain fresh consent.

Although the consultation is now closed, you can find the draft guidance on the ICO's Data Protection Reform website or by following this link - [GDPR consent guidance | ICO](#).

The GDPR will come into force on 25 May 2018.



Apprenticeship Provision and Support for your Business

Element Skills Training are a professional training provider offering high quality, innovative and responsive training tailored to businesses requirements. As a member of the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers, and part of the Cardiff and Vale College Group, Element Skills Training are in a unique position to support businesses of all sizes across the UK with their apprenticeship provision.

Element Skills Training specialise in building unique training programmes and now have funding available to support small, medium and large businesses reap the rewards that come with investing in the development and upskilling of employees. For more information on how Element Skills Training can support your business, visit www.elementskillstraining.co.uk or contact us at element@cavc.ac.uk



Do you know a local food or drink producer that would like to attend a free market?

SSDC will be hosting a local producer market on the fourth Saturday of each month from February until November 2017. Contact 01935 462173 if you would like to book a stand. #FoodisGREAT



SSDC4Business Twitter

Keep up to date with the latest business news and the activities of the Economic Development team here at South Somerset District Council.



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