

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release – 15 November 2004

Derby City Partnership adds value to employment and skills

Employment and skills was the focus for the Derby City Partnership Board at its most recent meeting. Discussion concentrated on how to make the most of current regeneration programmes to ensure local people benefit and what Derby City Partnership could contribute.

Karen Foulds, Derby City Partnership Board member and District Manager of Jobcentre Plus led the discussion. “There is a clear link between employment and skills and Derby City Partnership’s main priorities. Helping people to increase their skills has a knock-on effect on the whole community such as moving people into work, providing more spending power and helping to address child poverty. If communities do not benefit from increased employment prospects through large regeneration projects such as the expansion of the Eagle Centre and Cityscape developments, Derby City Partnership will have failed.”

Karen outlined the experience of the redevelopment of the Birmingham Bull Ring where 89% of jobs went to local people. Jobcentre Plus is already starting to work with Westfield on the expansion of the Eagle Centre to deliver similar figures for Derby and encouraged Derby City Partnership to get its full weight behind that. If the right approach is adopted, this would be a model for tackling other regeneration projects in the city such as those coming forward through Cityscape.

Other developments such as the potential re-location of civil servants to Derby and jobs arising from the expansion of the airport were highlighted by Richard Williams, Head of City Development and Tourism, Derby City Council. He advised that some 3,000-4,000 jobs may need to be filled over the next three years.

The Board recognised that there are skills and labour shortages with unemployment at 3% and employers need to be aware of these. Although this may not be a problem for employers providing a good salary and attractive packages, there is a problem for lower paid jobs. The pool of unemployed people is shrinking and employers need to be encouraged to consider recruiting from the potential workforce of lone parents and people currently claiming incapacity benefit who are keen to return to work.

A number of support packages have been developed by Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council and the Primary Care Trusts. There is evidence to show that lone parents are a reliable workforce and people who move into work after claiming incapacity benefit have fewer sick days than other employees. A key issue is how to engage people not currently using Jobcentre Plus services, such as older people and women at home who are not on benefit.

Cllr Maurice Burgess, Chair, said, "Derby City Partnership can add real value to the work already being carried out across the city." The discussion at the Board will be taken up by other groups in the partnership to ensure that partners' efforts can be put behind a co-ordinated approach to increasing employment opportunities and skills levels.

Ends

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Derby City Partnership is an alliance of organisations working together to create a better Derby.

Members represent

- public services
- local businesses
- community and voluntary groups
- individuals who live or work in Derby.

Since 1995, Derby City Partnership has been working to:

- develop closer and better working between organisations
- improve services and facilities
- attract funding
- make best use of all resources
- bring the work of all partnerships in the city together

Derby City Partnership is also the Local Strategic Partnership, delivering the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city.

Derby City Partnership Board meets bi-monthly. One hour of the meeting is devoted to a strategic discussion on a key topic for the city.

Derby City Partnership Board members include:

Bombardier Transportation (UK) Ltd
Central and Greater Derby Primary Care Trusts
Derby Area Trades Union Council
Derby City Council
Derby Cityscape Ltd
Derby Community Network
Derby Council for Voluntary Service
Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Derby Evening Telegraph

Derby Millennium Network
Derby Racial Equality Council
Derbyshire Building Society
Derbyshire Chamber and Business Link
Derbyshire Constabulary
Diocese of Derby
Forum of Faiths for Derby
Jobcentre Plus
Learning + Skills Council Derbyshire
Pro-Derby
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