



# **JOINT AREA COMMITTEE - WEST**

## **MARCH 2009**

### **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

Should members have questions regarding any of the items please contact the officer shown underneath the relevant report. If, after discussing the item with the officer and it is felt appropriate, a member may request an item to be considered at a future Committee meeting.

## **Jobcentre Plus Facilities at Chard Area Office**

### **Summary**

Jobcentre Plus customers can now use our Chard Area office – the Holyrood Lace Mill – to access Jobcentre Plus services. The access is by dedicated free telephone and a terminal giving direct access to the Jobcentre Plus website with local and national job vacancy information.

### **Background**

When Jobcentre Plus (JCP) announced they were reviewing their Chard office with a view to potential closure, SSDC lobbied for the office to remain open. Sadly the decision was taken to close the office at the end of March 2008. Andrew Gillespie (Head of Service Area Development (West)) immediately entered into discussion with Alan Madge (Partnership Manager, Dorset & Somerset Jobcentre Plus) to explore the possibility of offering a range of services to JCP customers in Chard and surrounding areas.

### **Facilities Available**

An agreement was reached where SSDC would host these access points:

- a Jobphone – a free telephone access to a wide range of JCP services
- a Jobpoint – an easy to use terminal connecting directly to the JCP website to access local and national job vacancy information
- an interview room - occasional use by JCP of existing interview room for JCP staff to meet with their clients

Legal agreements were drawn up to confirm and formalise the arrangements, equipment ordered and network connections ordered and installed. This took some time to complete. The Jobpoint itself had a 3-month lead time and could not be ordered until the legal agreement was signed.

Our reception area has been altered to create a dedicated JCP area to accommodate the telephone and terminal. Dedicated telephone lines and network connections had to be ordered and installed by JCP. The telephone equipment and Jobpoint were ordered. The difficulties experienced in the installation have now been overcome.

The Jobphone went live last September and has been well used by JCP customers.

The Jobpoint is planned to go live on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March.

For information please contact:  
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