

Could your council be spending more locally? How to persuade them on June 14th

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Could your council be spending more locally? Find out how to persuade them on June 14th

Are council contracts going to big firms that then sub contract back to you at half the price?
Find out what you and your FSB branch could be doing to change that.

Some FSB branches in the SW have changed the way their council buys. As a result much more money is spent with local small businesses. Other councils have switched to buying more from fewer, larger suppliers and local firms are losing out as a result.

Find out what is driving these changes and how FSB members have managed to change things for the better on Sunday, June 14th at the Exeter Court Hotel in Exeter.

Starting at 10.30 for 11am, the day includes lunch, speakers from SW Councils as well as FSB National Policy and the New Economics Foundation. We will be finishing about 4pm.
No charge but numbers are limited so hurry!

For full programme and joining sheet, please email vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk

Supply2gov – some are saying this is useless – what is your experience?

The centralised website, supply2gov, is supposed to make it easier for small businesses to find out about government contracts and so tender for them. We are getting reports that they do not answer queries and are not really very helpful.

Has anyone any experience of this please? Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk

Apprenticeships - more help for this vital source of staff

Over the past ten years, the numbers of people undertaking an apprenticeship has more than doubled and by 2020 the Government is committed to ensuring that there are 400,000 apprenticeships in England.

To help achieve this, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has just been launched. It will work closely with colleges and training providers delivering apprenticeships, as well as with key stake holders including the main business organisations, local authorities, and with employers themselves.

Part of the work of the NAS is the national Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service. Now up and running it allows potential apprentices to search, apply and then manage applications for Apprenticeships offered by employers anywhere in England. It's a free recruitment facility, and enables employers to use training providers to advertise current vacancies to those who are interested in becoming an apprentice.

For full details on apprenticeships including the vacancy matching service go to

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>

If you would like a speaker for a branch or regional meeting on the topic or have any information on how it is working in practice, drop an email to Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk

Going for growth? New SWRDA Loan Fund may be what you need

As part of the drive for economic recovery, the South West Regional Development Agency (RDA) has announced the launch of a new £10m South West Loans Fund which is now available to help growth-oriented business with viable business plans.

Interested businesses should contact Business Link who will take them through the first steps in the application process. Contact details: 0845 600 9966 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest.

By the way – SWRDA is the first Regional Development Agency to get their fund out to businesses. I am told the others are still negotiating the paperwork!

Post Bank petition – sign up link

For those of you supporting Chris Prentis and the Devon motion to national Conference, here is the link to the No 10 website so you can sign up and show your support.

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/PostBank/>

The petition reads:-

We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to establish a state-owned Post Bank as a matter of urgency to help underpin the future of the Post Office, combat financial exclusion and allow communities and local businesses to access a fair and trusted banking system

Talentmap – a new way to manage your recruitment, staff skill needs and training – Make a date in your Diary for June 30th

There is a lot of help out there for employers but many of us find it too complex and difficult to get what we need. About a year ago, a broad coalition of employers, governments and brokers came together with the UK Commission for Employment & Skills to create a simple view of the education, employment and skills systems in the UK.

Over the past 12 months the FSB has been working as part of this coalition to find a way to simplify matters. As a result talentmapTM is almost ready to launch.

1. It's a simple framework to help employers understand and plot their activities within the context of the wider talent & skills development offer.

2. It's an interactive web-tool where you can search for practical support and funding, build your own talentmap™ on line and share with colleagues, suppliers and others in the talentmap™ community.

Designed by employers for employers, talentmap™ is due for launch this summer but we want to check it out properly first.

There will be a workshop in Bristol on June 30th to introduce talentmap™ and demonstrate the web tool, as well as explain how it can be customised for your own use. There will also be on line trials of the beta version.

If you want to hear more, drop an email to Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk and as soon as the details are available, she'll get them to you.

ASBOs – late payment case studies needed – who do you want to name and shame?

The FSB would like to award 'ASBOs' to firms paying small businesses late.

To do that we need case studies.

So if you have a customer that pays you late and would like to nominate them for an ASBO, please let me know the details at Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk

Vivienne Rayner

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