Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership

Quarterly Economic Review
October 2005

Prepared by

The Economic Intelligence Unit

Wiltshire County Council

For

Wiltshire Economic Partnership Swindon

Wiltshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

QUARTERLY ECONOMIC REVIEW OCTOBER 2005

Welcome to the second edition of Wiltshire & Swindon's Quarterly Economic Review for October 2005, produced by the Economic Intelligence Unit, Wiltshire County Council. It forms part of a series of reviews that are intended to provide information on Wiltshire & Swindon's economy. In addition to providing you with a source of economic statistics[1][2], we have included local economic development news provided by the WSEP partners. We hope you find this publication useful and would appreciate any feedback that you may have. Items in the October 2005 issue include:

- National developments
- Employment
- Economic activity
- Unemployment
- Property market
- Skills for life (Numeracy, Literacy & ICT)
- Job losses & gains
- Local economic development news

Some of the items summarise larger datasets so should you require more detailed Information please contact the Economic Intelligence Unit at Wiltshire County Council, Environmental Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8JN:

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[1] Every effort has been made to provide the most recently available statistical information at the time of writing.

[2] This document will contain certain key economic indicators in every issue. The indicators that are released on an annual basis will be included in the quarterly reviews as and when they are made available. It is intended to include, whenever possible and if appropriate, information for the following geographies: national; regional; county/borough; and districts, as well as comparative information from the previous four quarters.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

“It’s all about oil!”

The ongoing saga of oil price rises dominated business & economy news in the last quarter. CPI inflation, the Government’s target measure rose to 2.4% in August which is the highest reading since the start of the official series in January 1997. The largest upward effect of this rise in inflation came from transport with petrol pump prices that rose gradually due to the movements in crude oil prices.

The main worry was that higher oil prices would be passed on by producers and eventually find their way into spiralling wage costs. Although input prices did rise - manufacturers managed to absorb much of this increase in their profit margins - last month the prices of goods leaving the factory gates did rise to their highest rates in five months. However, the price of oil fell back unexpectedly in September which has now lowered producer input prices. Average earnings growth remained relatively subdued.

Although the economy is in slowdown and interest rates have started to come down, the Monetary Policy Committee is unlikely to make any further interest rate cuts to stimulate demand unless the economy slowdown worsens.

LABOUR MARKET

This section provides an overview of headline key labour market indicators in order to gauge the level of employment and economic activity in Wiltshire and Swindon, benchmarked against regional and national averages. The indicators used are: employment rate; unemployment rate; and economic activity/inactivity rate.

Employment

The employment rate is defined as the proportion of an economy’s working age population that is in employment. It provides an indication on the level of engagement the area’s residents are having in the labour market and the ability of an economy to create jobs. The Labour Force Survey’s (LFS) June 2004 to May 2005 figures show that with 82% and 83.9% respectively, Wiltshire and Swindon continue to have higher employment rates than the regional and national averages (Table 1). Salisbury is still the district with the highest employment rate (86.5%) and North Wiltshire continues to be the lowest (77.5%). The employment rates across Swindon, Kennet, West Wiltshire and Salisbury were higher in the period June 2004 – May 2005 than for the same period a year earlier. North Wiltshire is the only Wiltshire district to have undergone a decline in employment rate.

Table 1: Employment rate of working age population

Area	Jun 2003-May 2004	Sep 2003-Aug 2004	Dec 2003-Nov 2004	Mar 2004-Feb 2005	Jun 2004 - May 2005
Great Britain	74.8	74.9	74.9	75.0	74.9
South West	78.8	78.9	78.7	78.6	78.8
Wilts & Swindon	80.9	80.9	80.8	81.6	82.6
Swindon	81.3	81.9	83.0	83.5	83.9
Wiltshire	80.7	80.5	79.9	80.8	82
Kennet	78.4	77.8	78.1	80.3	83
North Wiltshire	82.2	79.9	78.1	77.2	77.5
Salisbury	83.9	84.6	85.1	86.5	86.5
West Wiltshire	77.0	78.5	78.0	79.7	82.4

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, NOMIS 2005.

Economic Activity

The economic activity rate is a good indicator of the health of the labour market in an area. Persons are economically active if they are either employed or unemployed in a particular period. Economically active people can thus be defined as those who supply or want to supply their labour to produce goods and services for the economy. The rates are calculated by expressing the number of persons in the labour force (the labour force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons) as a percentage of the working age population. Table 2 shows that in the period June 2004 to May 2005 Wiltshire and Swindon had higher economic activity rates than the regional and national averages. Of the four Wiltshire districts, Kennet enjoyed the highest economic activity rate with 87.9% whilst North Wiltshire was the district with the lowest figure (82.5%). The economic activity rates across Swindon, Kennet and West Wiltshire were higher in the period June 2004 – May 2005 than for the same period a year earlier.

Table 2: Economic activity rate of working age population

Area	Jun 2003-May 2004	Sep 2003-Aug 2004	Dec 2003-Nov 2004	Mar 2004-Feb 2005	Jun 2004-May 2005
Great Britain	78.8	78.7	78.7	78.7	78.7
South West	81.5	81.5	81.4	81.4	81.6
Wilts & Swindon	84.1	84.1	84.1	84.5	85.5
Swindon	86.0	86.2	86.5	86.2	86.5
Wiltshire	83.3	83.1	83.0	83.8	85.0
Kennet	79.8	80.3	82.2	84.5	87.9
North Wiltshire	84.8	83.3	82.2	82.0	82.5
Salisbury	87.8	87.5	87.7	88.0	87.4
West Wiltshire	79.2	80.1	79.8	81.5	84.1

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, NOMIS 2005

Table 3 shows that the economic inactivity rates in Salisbury and Swindon remained more or less the same in the period June 2004 – May 2005, when compared to the same period a year earlier. In West Wiltshire, the rate dropped significantly from 20.8% in June 2003 - May 2004 to 15.9% in June 2004 - May 2005. North Wiltshire, on the other hand, had an increase in economic inactivity rate from 15.2% to 17.5%. Economic inactivity is also a labour supply side indicator because each economically inactive person can potentially move into the labour market at some point. The economically inactive consists of those people who are out of work but are either not seeking work or are unavailable to start work (i.e. students, looking after family or home, long term sick and disabled, temporarily sick or injured, retired early, discouraged workers).

Table 3: Economic inactivity rate of working age population

Area	Jun 2003-May 2004	Dec 2003-Nov 2004	Mar 2004-Feb 2005	Jun 2004-May 2005	Jun 2004-May 2005
Great Britain	21.2	21.3	21.3	21.3	21.3
South West	18.5	18.5	18.6	18.6	18.4
Wilts & Swindon	15.9	15.9	15.9	15.5	14.5
Swindon	14.0	13.8	13.5	13.8	13.5
Wiltshire	16.7	16.9	17.0	16.2	15.0
Kennet	20.2	19.7	17.8	15.5	#
North Wiltshire	15.2	16.7	17.8	18.0	17.5
Salisbury	12.2	12.5	12.3	12.0	12.6
West Wiltshire	20.8	19.9	20.2	18.5	15.9

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, NOMIS 2005
#Suppressed by NOMIS

Table 4 shows that in West Wiltshire the proportion of those who are economically inactive but would still like to work is 37.1% which amounts to approximately 5,600 working age people. In North Wiltshire, Kennet and Salisbury the figures are 5,600, 2,600 and 2,500 respectively. With 6,100, Swindon has the highest number of economically active people who would like to find work. Together with those registered as unemployed, these people represent a potentially underutilised source of labour. See section on Unemployment (Table 5) for further information on the 'hidden unemployed'.

Table 4: % of economically inactive who want/do not want a job, 2003/2004

	Great Britain	South West	Swindon	Wiltshire	Kennet	North Wiltshire	Salisbury	West Wiltshire
Want a job	26.2	31.4	34.2	33.4	36	31.3	27.5	37.1
Do not want a job	73.8	68.6	65.8	66.6	64	68.7	72.5	62.9

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, NOMIS 2005

Unemployment

The claimant count is based on the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and is taken from monthly records. People claiming JSA must declare they are out of work, available for, capable of and actively seeking employment during the week in which the claim was made. Claimant count rates express the number of JSA claimants as a percentage of working age people in an area. Table 5 reveals that in July 2005 Swindon (2.1%) had a higher claimant count rate than Wiltshire (0.8%) although it was just under the national rate of 2.4%. West Wiltshire is the district with the highest claimant count rate with 1.0% although this figure is still lower than the national rate. Although claimant count rates in Wiltshire and Swindon have remained relatively unchanged since April 2005, they have increased slightly when compared to the figures recorded in July 2004. Wiltshire & Swindon had 868 more claimants in July 2005 than it did in July 2004.

Table 5: Claimant count rates working age population

Area	July 2004		April 2005		May 2005		June 2005		July 2005	
	No	*Rate*	*No*	*Rate*	*No*	*Rate*	*No*	*Rate*	*No*	*Rate*
Great Britain	810,180	2.3	843,169	2.4	839,547	2.3	829,994	2.3	841,421	2.4
South West	39,012	1.3	43,501	1.5	42,279	1.4	40,914	1.4	41,410	1.4
Wilts & Swin	3,805	1.0	4,650	1.2	4,717	1.2	4,611	1.2	4,673	1.2
Swindon	1,981	1.7	2,434	2.1	2,487	2.2	2,441	2.1	2,466	2.1
Wiltshire	1,824	0.7	2,216	0.8	2,230	0.8	2,170	0.8	2,207	0.8
Kennet	387	0.8	424	0.9	413	0.9	388	0.8	382	0.8
North Wilts	518	0.7	639	0.8	676	0.9	658	0.8	689	0.9
Salisbury	345	0.5	412	0.6	407	0.6	418	0.6	409	0.6
West Wilts	574	0.8	741	1.0	734	1.0	706	1.0	727	1.0

Source: Claimant Count, NOMIS 2005.

The figures in Table 6 are based on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of unemployment which includes as unemployed all those who are out of work, want a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks prior to interview and are available to start work within the next fortnight, or are our of work and have accepted a job they are waiting to start in the next fortnight. The contrast between the claimant count rate and the unemployment rate suggests that there is a difference in unemployment numbers representing a few thousand working age people who could possibly be regarded as part of the ‘hidden unemployed’. The ‘hidden unemployed’ do not claim or may not be entitled to Job Seekers Allowance and are therefore excluded from official unemployment statistics that are based on the claimant count.

The unemployment rates are calculated by dividing the number of unemployed people by those who are economically active. The figures below indicate that there has been a drop in unemployment rate (from Jun 2003 – May 2004 to June 2004 – May 2005) in Wiltshire & Swindon, which represents a total decline in numbers of around 1,000.

Table 6: Unemployment rates working age population

Area	Jun 2003-May 2004	Sep 2003-Aug 2004	Dec 2003-Nov 2004	Mar 2004-Feb 2005	Jun 2004-May 2005
Great Britain	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.8
Wilts & Swindon	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.4

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, NOMIS 2005
Data for the four Wiltshire districts have been excluded since the estimates are unreliable.

The unemployment data (claimant count and ILO unemployment) above show that even though employment levels are at a record high, the labour market is now beginning to soften. The number of jobless people in Wiltshire & Swindon has fallen but more people are claiming unemployment related benefits. This increase may be attributed to the slowdown in consumer spending which has put pressure on retailers and other service sector firms. The rise in the claimant count measure, coupled with the slight slowdown in the national pace of earnings growth indicates that the labour market is slowly beginning to stabilise.

PROPERTY

This section examines residential and commercial property prices. It also contains an overview of office, industrial and employment land availability in Wiltshire. Commercial property data for Swindon is not available for this edition of the Wiltshire and Swindon Quarterly Economic Review.

Commercial Property

Over the last year (August 2004 –August 2005), office availability within Wiltshire increased by 11.98%, from 831,542 sq ft to 931,179 sq ft. This trend is accounted for by significant increases in office availability in the North Wiltshire, West Wiltshire and Salisbury districts (12.26%, 17.01% and 61.12% respectively). The increases in these particular districts have been due to 21 units coming onto the market in North Wiltshire in the last 12 months and only 6 coming off the market, large premises entering the market in Trowbridge and Melksham (accounting for a total of 68,592 sq ft) and in the case of Salisbury; a significant amount of office space becoming available at Solstice Park, Beaumont Business Centre, Brunel Road and Minton Distribution Park. The increase in office availability within these three districts has however been offset slightly by a 46.23% decrease in office availability in Kennet, caused by Horton Road Industrial Estate (Devizes) coming off the market (Table 7).

Table 7: Office Availability in Wiltshire, August 2004 – August 2005

Area	August 2004 Sq Ft	August 2005 Sq Ft
North Wiltshire	402,189	451,485
Kennet	132,094	71,041
West Wiltshire	159,346	186,451
Salisbury	137,913	222,202
Wiltshire	831,542	931,179

Source: Evolutive, Wiltshire County Council, 2005

During the period August 2004 to August 2005, Wiltshire witnessed a decline in the availability of industrial premises (including warehousing), with the total area of industrial premises in the county falling by 563,258.2 sq ft (22.96%); from 2,453,138.2 sq ft to 1,889,880 sq ft.

Industrial premises availability decreased across all districts, but most significantly within Kennet; seeing a fall of 250,225 sq ft (48.25%). West Wiltshire witnessed a decline of 102, 050 sq ft (24.28%) whilst North Wiltshire experienced a fall of 194,400.2 sq ft (20.3%). Salisbury by comparison experienced only a small decrease in industrial premises availability; 16,583 sq ft (2.97%). The decline in industrial premises availability in Kennet can largely be explained by the fact that 3 large sites at Hopton Park were found to have been duplicated on the Evolutive property database and have subsequently been withdrawn, also 3 developments at Horton Road were sold/let during this period.

The decline in industrial premises availability within the district of West Wiltshire can be attributed to the take-up of existing units and a lack of new premises entering the market. The decline in North Wiltshire is principally explained by 150,000 sq ft of premises coming off the market at Colerne and 30,000 sq ft coming of the market at Bumpers Farm, and no significant new units entering the market (Table 8).

Table 8: Industrial Availability Wiltshire, August 2004 –August 2005

Area	August 2004 Sq Ft	August 2005 Sq Ft
North Wiltshire	955,162.2	760,762
Kennet	518,579	268,354
West Wiltshire	420,195	318,145
Salisbury	559,202	542,619
Wiltshire	2,453,138.2	1,889,880

Source: Evolutive, Wiltshire County Council, 2005

The total acreage of employment land available in Wiltshire at August 2004 was 399.6; by August 2005 this had fallen by 9.62% to 361.15. This trend can be largely explained by a significant decrease in the availability of employment land within North Wiltshire, which fell from 43.1 acres in August 2004 to 21.9 acres in August 2005 (a 49.18% drop). This was due to exit of 2 key sites from the market; Lydiard Fields, Wootton Bassett (15 acres), and Beversbrook, Calne (5 acres), and also by a lack of new land coming onto the market. Salisbury district also witnessed a decline in employment land availability over this period (a fall of 5.24%) due to the exit of key sites from the market -the Netherhampton Road site (10.5 acres) and the Winterbourne Stoke site (5 acres) (Table 9).

Table 9: Employment Land Availability Wiltshire, August 2004 – August 2005

Area	August 2004 Acres	August 2005 Acres
North Wiltshire	43.1	21.9
Kennet	3.50	2.50
West Wiltshire	57.0	56.25
Salisbury	296	280.5
Wiltshire	399.6	361.15

Source: Evolutive, Wiltshire County Council, 2005

Average Commercial Rents

Average commercial rents for office premises appear to have remained very stable over the last year in Wiltshire, with Chippenham and Salisbury experiencing only minor decreases in average rents from £9.55 to £9.07 (5.03%) and £9.84 to £9.61 (2.34%) respectively. A slightly larger decrease was seen in Trowbridge, with the average commercial rent for office premises falling from £10.26 to £9.34 (8.97%), however this trend is likely to be explained by variations in the number of properties on the database with rental price information. In contrast to the other districts, the average commercial rent for office premises in Devizes seems to have risen across the last 12 months, from £3.98 to £4.37 (9.80%), however this is largely a product of the fact that for many of the Devizes properties, agents have not provided any / correct pricing information.

The overall trend for average commercial rents for industrial premises in Wiltshire between August 2004 and August 2005 seems to have been an increase, with rises in average rents being recorded in Salisbury (15.87%), Trowbridge (11.01%) and Devizes (107.3%). However, the exceptionally large increase seen in Devizes is almost certainly a function of the lack of (accurate) pricing information provided by agents with regard to properties in that area. Indeed, inconsistency and inaccuracy in the pricing information provided by agents would also help to explain the decrease in average commercial rents for industrial premises in Chippenham, from £5.60 to £5.04, and prevents us from obtaining an accurate picture of trends in average commercial rents (Table 10).

Table 10: Average Commercial Rents, Summer 2004 – Summer 2005 (£ per sq. ft pa)

Area	June / July / August 2004		June / July / August 2005	
	Office	Industrial	Office	Industrial
Chippenham	£9.55	£5.60	£9.07	£5.04
Devizes	£3.98	£2.74	£4.37	£5.68
Salisbury	£9.84	£5.98	£9.61	£6.93
Trowbridge	£10.26	£5.63	£9.34	£6.23

Source: Evolutive, Wiltshire County Council, 2005

Residential Property

The Land Registry deals with the sale of all properties in England & Wales. It holds the most comprehensive information published on residential property transactions and prices. Land registry data for the quarter April to June 2005 puts the average house price (of all property types) for England & Wales at £184,822. Average house prices in North Wiltshire, Kennet and Salisbury are all higher than the regional and national averages. In Swindon and West Wiltshire they are lower (Table 11).

The average house price in England & Wales in April – June 2005 was about 5 % higher than in the same quarter a year earlier whilst across the South West region, they rose by about 4%. Averages house prices in Kennet, Salisbury and Swindon rose by over 6%, higher than the regional and national rates. However, in West Wiltshire (4.4%) the price rise narrowly failed to match the national rate and in North Wiltshire there was a decline of 2.7%.

Most recent comparisons of average house price changes reveal that the housing market correction that began in the third quarter of 2004 still continues in England & Wales. The national figures indicate little change in April – June 2005 when compared to the previous quarter and the regional figures even suggest another slight decline. Average house price changes across Swindon the four Wiltshire districts were more varied with prices in North Wiltshire, and Salisbury falling once again and in Swindon, Kennet and West Wiltshire increasing.

Table 11: Average house price

Area	April-Jun 2004 (£)	July-Sept 2004 (£)	Oct-Dec 2005 (£)	Jan-Mar 2005 (£)	Apr-Jun 2005 (£)
England & Wales	175,802	187,846	183,306	184,131	184,922
South West	187,420	200,886	198,693	197,724	195,496
Swindon	154,383	157,363	156,368	155,340	163,203
Wiltshire	199,047	219,659	213,423	208,842	206,053
North Wiltshire	202,069	219,576	212,988	203,610	196,671
Kennet	221,752	242,896	236,695	231,326	239,066
West Wiltshire	175,433	188,416	179,299	179,669	183,182
Salisbury	220,009	246,956	253,682	243,139	235,499

Source: Residential Property Price Data, Land Registry 2005

The national housing market is set to continue to cool down over the coming months. There are several factors that have cut into the housing market: higher house prices; higher interest rates; limited new builds; lower immigration forecasts; student loans; higher stamp duties; tighter rules on inheritance tax & capital gains tax; and changing lifestyle trends (e.g. more young adults are choosing to flat share or stay on in the family home). Although there is no hint of a return to the negative equity days, there is no doubt that price changes will either remain neutral or fall slightly by the end of the year.

SKILLS FOR LIFE (NUMERACY, LITERACY & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)

This section provides estimates of adult skills needs for: literacy; numeracy; and information, communication & technology.

In 1999 the Moser Report concluded that one in five adults had less literacy than was expected of an 11 year old child and that around 40% of adults experienced significant numeracy problems. To establish a more robust evidence base for the Skills for Life Strategy, the DfES commissioned the Skills for Life Survey (SFL) and it is this survey that supplies the estimates of skills need displayed in Table 12.

Swindon

The literacy skills of 10,740 adults (9% of adults) in Swindon are at Entry Level 3 or below, i.e. below GCSE level; this is significantly lower than the England figure of 16%. The numeracy data reveals that 58,960 adults (54% of adults) are at Entry Level 3 or below; this is higher than the England figure of 46%. This data tells us that when compared to the England averages, Swindon has significantly higher skill levels in literacy but not in numeracy. In terms of ICT skills, 56% of adults in Swindon are at Entry Level 1 (i.e. Key Stage 1).

Kennet

The literacy skills of 3,045 adults (7% of adults) in Kennet are at Entry Level 3 or below, i.e. below GCSE level; this is significantly lower than the England figure of 16%. The numeracy data reveals that 18,635 adults (45% of adults) are at Entry Level 3 or below; this is slightly lower than the England figure of 46%. This data tells us that when compared to the England averages, Kennet has higher skill levels in literacy as well as numeracy. In terms of ICT skills, 45% of adults in Kennet are at Entry Level 1 (i.e. Key Stage 1).

North Wiltshire

The literacy skills of 4,505 adults (5% of adults) in North Wiltshire are at Entry Level 3 or below, i.e. below GCSE level; this is significantly lower than the England figure of 16%. The numeracy data reveals that 29,500 adults (41% of adults) are at Entry Level 3 or below; this is lower than the England figure of 46%. This data tells us that when compared to the England averages, North Wiltshire has higher skill levels in literacy as well as numeracy. In terms of ICT skills, 40% of adults in Wiltshire are at Entry Level 1 (i.e. Key Stage 1).

Salisbury

The literacy skills of 5,920 adults (9% of adults) in Salisbury are at Entry Level 3 or below, i.e. below GCSE level; this is significantly lower than the England figure of 16%. The numeracy data reveals that 30,220 adults (47% of adults) are at Entry Level 3 or below; this is slightly higher than the England figure of 46%. This data tells us that when compared to the England averages, Salisbury has higher skill levels in literacy but not in numeracy. In terms of ICT skills, 55% of adults in Salisbury are at Entry Level 1 (i.e. Key Stage 1).

West Wiltshire

The literacy skills of 6,020 adults (9% of adults) in West Wiltshire are at Entry Level 3 or below, i.e. below GCSE level; this is significantly lower than the England figure of 16%. The numeracy data reveals that 30,935 adults (45% of adults) are at Entry Level 3 or below; this is slightly lower than the England figure of 46%. This data tells us that when compared to the England averages, West Wiltshire has higher skill levels in literacy as well as numeracy. In terms of ICT skills, 52% of the population in West Wiltshire are at Entry Level 1 (i.e. Key Stage 1).

The data reveals that even though the proportion of Wiltshire & Swindon's adults with low level literacy and numeracy skills is not as high as the England average, the fact remains that there are still 30,230 adults in Wiltshire & Swindon with Entry Levels 1, 2 or 3 literacy skills (i.e. below GCSE level) and 168,250 adults with Entry Levels 1, 2 or 3 numeracy skills. This is probably a reflection of the fact that overall, the UK's literacy and numeracy skills are amongst the poorest of the advanced OECD countries.

Table 12: % of the Population with numeracy, literacy and ICT Skills, 2002/2003[3]

	England	South West	Swindon	Kennet	North Wiltshire	Salisbury	West Wiltshire
Literacy							
Entry Level 1 Skills	3	2	0	0	0	1	1
Entry Level 2 Skills	2	3	1	1	0	1	1
Entry Level 3 Skills	11	9	8	6	5	7	7
Level 1 Skills	40	41	43	42	40	44	46
Level 2 (+) Skills	44	46	47	51	55	46	45
Numeracy							
Entry Level 1 Skills	5	5	7	2	2	3	2
Entry Level 2 Skills	16	16	14	12	11	15	15
Entry Level 3 Skills	25	28	33	31	28	29	28
Level 1 Skills	28	29	25	31	33	31	36
Level 2 (+) Skills	25	23	19	26	29	32	24
ICT Skills							
Total Entry Level Skills	53	59	56	45	40	55	52
Level 1 Skills	47	41	44	55	60	45	48

Source: Read Write Plus Skills for Life, DfES, 2005

JOB LOSSES AND GAINS

Table 13: Job losses

Company	Activity	No. of Jobs Lost	Date Reported	Comment
Avon Technical Products	Manufacturing	Up to 25	July 2005	This firm has announced plans to make up to 25 workers redundant. The redundancies are being blamed on a fall in profits due to falling sales.
R.Tincknell and Son	Agricultural Engineers	Not known	August 2005	This engineering firm has announced plans to close its Devizes and Wilton depots at the end of October. It has been reported that this is due to the firm's loss of the John Deere franchise. Some members of staff will take on jobs at the company's other depots and others have opted for redundancy.

Source: Extracted from the local press. This is not an exhaustive list of all job losses in Wiltshire & Swindon reported between July and September 2005

[3] Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3 are below GCSE level; they are broadly comparable with National Curriculum Key Stages 1 (7 year olds), 2 (11 year olds) and 3 (14 year olds).

Level 1 is broadly comparable with a low level GCSE (D to G) and level 2 is comparable with a high level GCSE (A* to C).

Table 14: Job gains

Company	Activity	No. of Jobs Gained	Date Reported	Comment
Focus	DIY retail and garden centre	Up to 80 jobs	July 2005	Focus DIY has announced that it will open a new flagship store on the former Clark's site in Fairfield Road, Warminster. West Wilshire District Council is considering the application.
Specsavers	Opticians	4	August 2005	Specsavers in Trowbridge have redesigned their premises and in the process created four new jobs.

Source: Extracted from the local press. This is not an exhaustive list of all job gains in Wiltshire & Swindon reported between July and September 2005

SUMMARY – KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

	Population Growth % 2001 -2004	GVA Per Head 2002 (£)	GVA Growth (%) per annum 1995-2002	Economic Activity Rate Jun 2004 – May 2005	Employment Rate Jun 2004 – May 2005	Claimant Count Rate July 2005	Change in Employment (%) 1998-2003	Change in Number of Firms (%) 1998 - 2003	Average Price (£) of Residential Property Apr-Jun 2005
Great Britain *	1.23	15,633	58.6	78.7	74.9	2.4	5.9	7.4	184,922
South West	1.09	14,286	5.9	81.6	78.8	1.4	10.9	10.2	195,496
Wiltshire & Swindon	2.5	-	-	85.5	82.6	1.2	4.6	13.9	-
Wiltshire	2.7	13,861	4.8	85	82	0.8	11.5	14.7	206,053
Swindon	1.9	24,113	6.7	86.5	83.9	2.1	-5.1	11.9	163,203
Kennet	2.2	-	-	87.9	83.0	0.8	16.3	17.8	239,066
North Wiltshire	2.1	-	-	82.5	77.5	0.9	8.0	13.9	196,671
Salisbury	1.7	-	-	87.4	86.5	0.6	22.8	14.2	235,499
West Wiltshire	4.6	-	-	84.1	82.4	1.0	2.7	13.8	183,182

Source: NOMIS, ONS, Land Registry
**England (not Great Britain) is the national geographical area for residential property and GVA statistics.*

OTHER NEWS

This section provides an opportunity for WSEP Partners to report on economic development news and events.

- South West RDA announced that it has achieved the following results against its major targets agreed with Government:

  - Jobs created or safeguarded - 6586 (against a target of 6000)
  - Business start-ups - 262 (against a target of 200)
  - Brownfield Land development, in hectares - 146 (against a target of 145)
  - Learning opportunities - 8532 (against a target of 6000)
  - Total private sector finance attracted - £149,196,551 (against a target of £115,000,000)

  For more information on South West RDA projects and initiatives in your area please visit the 'Highlights 2005' brochure, which will be available on the publications section of the South West RDA website www.southwestrda.org.uk on the 20 September.

- The Wiltshire Strategic Board has chosen to champion 4 particular projects, namely to encourage healthier lifestyles; to improve adult skills for life attainment levels; to reduce waste; and to improve the street and lane scene, including the safety and maintenance of these public spaces. It is using a number of ways to implement these aims, one of which is to put these topics at the core of the Local Public Service Agreement it is currently negotiating with Government. This will involve setting 12 'stretch' targets which, if achieved during the next three years, will receive Performance Reward Grant which the Board can spend on furthering its agenda.

  Another way that the Strategic Board is promoting its aims is through the development of a concept called, 'Exemplary Employers –leading by example'. The idea is that each of the Strategic Board members should commit to improving its own performance around reducing waste, promoting healthier choices, and improving the skills for life levels of its employees. Guidance on possible targets and types of action that could be taken are being developed. For instance, organisations are being asked to aim to reduce waste to less than 200 kgs per employee per year, or to ban smoking in their offices and grounds. Organisations will be able to contribute to these aims to varying degrees, but all are asked to assess their current performance and set improvement targets.

  The Board hopes that by 'leading by example' it can encourage a much wider range of organizations and businesses to commit to tackling these issues. Also the example will also spread through employees' families and friends to a much wider audience in the County. The Board is going to formally launch this initiative at its Conference on 12th October, 2005. Further information can be supplied by Sarah Brady on 01225 713 094.

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