

## WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL MAKES THE SKILLS PLEDGE

**Date of issue**            1 April 2009

West Somerset Council has made a special commitment to staff training and development by making the Skills Pledge.

The Skills Pledge, led by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), is a voluntary commitment by organisations to support all employees to develop their skill levels to at least Level 2, the equivalent of 5 GCSEs (grade A-C).

Councillor Keith Ross, Leader of the Council, made the Skills Pledge at a ceremony on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March at the Council Offices in Williton.

The Council employs over 100 staff and the pledge will ensure the Council's commitment to their continued professional development. Both the Council and the LSC hope that by making a public commitment to train their staff other organisations in the area will be encouraged to do the same.

Other local organisations taking the pledge were the charity MIND in Taunton West Somerset and Minehead-based business, Price Western Leather.

Skills Broker, Catherine Owens will support the Council's Skills Pledge by helping to create a training plan for staff through the Train to Gain service. The tailored action plan will look at all processes and suggest ways in which these can be made more efficient and effective by providing the right skills to meet the needs of each employee.

Commenting on the event Cllr Ross said: "The skills pledge shows staff that we value their skills, and that we are committed to supporting their professional development and optimising their future opportunities. It is also important in demonstrating to customers that we are, through this scheme, continually striving to improve our services to them.

"We hope that many local organisations also make the skills pledge so that workers across West Somerset can make the most of available opportunities, increase their job satisfaction and their earning potential."

Trish Taylor, Area Director of the Dorset and Somerset Learning and Skills Council, said:  
"In making the Skills Pledge, West Somerset Council is not only committing to increase the skills of their workforce, but they are also realising the potential of each individual employee. They are supporting their employees as they gain the skills to make the organisation more efficient and successful."

ENDS

**Note to Editors:**

**Learning and Skills Council:**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers. For more information visit: [www.lsc.gov.uk/southwest](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/southwest)

The Skills Pledge reads:

'On behalf of ..I,..make a commitment that we shall:

- Actively encourage and support our employees to gain the skills and qualifications that will support their future employability and meet the needs of our business/organisation;
- Actively encourage and support our employees to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, and with Government support work towards their first level 2 qualifications in an area that is relevant to our business/organisation;
- Demonstrably raise our employees' skills and competencies to improve company/organisation performance through investing in economically valuable training and development.

Signed....'

More information on the Skills Pledge can be found at  
<http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk/employersSkillsPledge.html>

**All media enquiries, please contact:**

Lindsay or Jenny at JBP on 0117 9073400 or email [lindsay@jbp.co.uk](mailto:lindsay@jbp.co.uk) or  
[jenny@jbp.co.uk](mailto:jenny@jbp.co.uk)

Public Document