



SevernNet is a not for profit social enterprise set up in 2009 and run by businesses and community interests across the area from Royal Portbury Dock in N. Somerset through to Western Approach Industrial Park nr. Aust in S. Gloucestershire.

Our aim is to enable businesses and the communities to get to know each other and work with each other for the common good, helping solve common challenges, improving the area and doing business with each other.

A longstanding area of concern has been lack of transport services to get people to and from work, and in getting enough people to fill vacancies across the area.

The SevernNet Flyer is a shuttle bus service developed around the needs of five employers across the area – Yankee Candle, Culina, Elemis, Co-op Distribution Centre and Nisbets, but for the use of any employees working in the area. The service has been designed to pick people up coming into Avonmouth on public transport and those living in, or connecting with the service in Avonmouth, Lawrence Weston and Shirehampton. It is timed to enable people to get to work 7 days a week for shifts starting at 06:00, 14:00, 22:00; for 07:00 and 19:00 shift patterns and generally for starters between 08:00 and 09:00. The Sunday timetable is focused more on shift times than 'office hours'.

This pilot service has been funded by the SevernNet Working partnership until March 2017. We are looking at mechanisms to support its long term sustainability and its extension to Western Approach Industrial Park in S. Glos.

Another concern is supporting local people into local work and other initiatives to help fill vacancies. The SevernNet Working Partnership has built upon the work of partners and SevernNet Employment events to establish two Employment and Enterprise Hubs in Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston, where our full time Employment Support workers help people into work. They can also run sessions with specific employers.

An Enterprise Support Service also works out of the hubs helping local SMEs to start up and/or grow.

We have also been working with partners to support businesses develop Apprenticeship schemes.

Other areas where SevernNet has been able to have an influence:

- The design and management of the A403 highway reconstruction project. The consultations we supported enabled changes in some aspects of the design.
- Improvement of the cycle and walking paths across the area. By the end of March a cycle path should also be in place along Kings Weston Lane after lobbying from businesses and the community.

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SevernNet facilitates:

- The quarterly Sustainable Transport Forum, bringing key stakeholders together in order to support improvements in transport infrastructure and services
- A Health and Safety Peer to Peer Networking Group supporting health and safety practitioners across the area
- A Circular Economy Forum supporting businesses wishing to exchange ideas and practices around resource efficiency and effectiveness
- A monthly Business Breakfast on the third Thursday of each month from 07:30 to 09:00. This is hosted by different businesses and organisations across the area who are interested to let others know what they're doing
- A regular newsletter keeping people up to date with known roadworks, events and other items of interest principally to the business community, supported by the SevernNet website.

With website enhancements planned for the New Year a comprehensive Business Directory and Resource Forum will be rolled out in the first half of 2017.

SevernNet's Membership scheme enables local businesses to make a small contribution to help fund the above work. Members also receive a Membership Certificate, recognition on the SevernNet website and space to promote their business, priority access to our events and initiatives. We are also introducing a Members Bulletin, enabling members to promote their events, goods and services through the newsletter.

SevernNet, November 2016

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