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PRESS RELEASE

**BUSINESS LINK LAUNCHES 'SHE'S THE BUSINESS' FOR WOMEN
SERIOUS ABOUT BUSINESS**

Working towards starting a new business or becoming self-employed? Looking to convert a hobby into a business? Aiming to get a business off the ground? This can be exciting, but also a nerve-racking, daunting experience, for women in particular

To give them a helping hand, Business Link has developed a new free programme aimed at women in Surrey called "She's the business" and features a series of dynamic workshops, networking and advice sessions run during the school term in school hours.

Participants will also be able to share experiences and advice through a dedicated online discussion forum and have the opportunity to drop in for advice, or call to discuss business issues.

The programme continues with start dates of Jan 16th and 24th in Guildford and Dorking respectively and Feb 1st, 2007 in Epsom, and following successful completion of the 9 week programme participants will be in a position to trade.

Roz Maher, Enterprise Development Manager for Business Link Surrey comments, "In the South East, women make up 52% of the adult population and 46% of the working population. However, only 27% of the self-employed and only about 15% of business owners are women. This is a lost opportunity for our economy. We need significantly more entrepreneurs in the South East and women represent the greatest untapped potential."

Roz strongly believes that 'She's the business' will inspire its participants. "Starting in business after working as an employee, having children, taking a career break, or trying something completely different, can be difficult for many women. We will be taking a fresh approach in group sessions – working with women to overcome barriers to starting their businesses, to fill knowledge or information gaps and to generate a supportive network. The format of the programme also provides a valuable opportunity for women to meet and talk to other women who are also starting or have set up their own businesses.'

Places are very limited on this SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) funded programme. For further information or to see if the programme is right for you telephone 0845 600 9 006, or visit the Business Link website at www.businesslinksurrey.co.uk/shesthebusiness

Business Link is the impartial route to the best information, advice and skills for small and medium sized organisations in Surrey. Funded by Government, the organisation provides new and existing businesses with access to practical information and advice across the complete spectrum of business issues. During 2005 Business Link offered support to over 20,000 business enterprises in the county.