

Swindon Enterprise Group

2.30pm, Tuesday 4th December 2007

Beard Construction, Faraday Road, Dorcan

Present:

Daphne Milner (DM) - GWE (Chair)
Pete Manley (PM) - SWRDA
Peter Beech-Allen (PBA) - GWE
Mark Beard (MB) - Beard Construction
Roger Wilkins (RW) - Business Link
Matt Spencer (MS) - Swindon Borough Council
Emma Faramarzi (EF) – Federation of Small Businesses
Steve Causer (SC) – Swin City/Frequency

Apologies:

Phil Merrick (PhM) - Innovation Centre/Swindon Chamber of Commerce
David Evans (DE) - Swindon Borough Council
John Bennett (JB) - Young Enterprise

1) Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record

2) Matters arising

- 2.1 DE contacted Emma Faramarzi from the FSB who joined the meeting
- 2.2 MB passed details of the Youth into Enterprise Meeting on to Richard Carter of Beard Construction
- 2.4 DE will circulate a list of forthcoming partnership meetings
3. Business Charter – on agenda for this meeting
4. DE has circulated a list of the delegates for the SSEP conference
- 5.1 Funding from EBPlus for Enterprise Days project will be discussed after the project proposal is solidified.

- 5.2.1 Innovation and mentoring steering group – DE to arrange meeting in the new year between PBA, PhM and himself
- 5.2.2 Contract with GWE – DE has issued contracts for both the innovation and mentoring projects.
6. DE issued a press release regarding Enterprise Week.
7. Swindon LAA - DE fed the group's comments into the next draft of the pen picture.
8. Swindon New Business Competition – DE gave MB information about the finalists.

3) Review of SSEP Conference on 14th November

There was a discussion around the success of the conference. It was agreed that, overall, the launch was a great success. There is a need to build on the event's success and gain momentum. Alan Fletcher from the Swindon Chamber is helping to organise a major employers event. It was suggested that another email from Rikki would be beneficial, especially if it outlined ways to become a mentor.

Post Meeting note:

This email was sent out to all conference attendees on 16th November:

Thank you to everybody for making the SSEP conference on Wednesday such a resounding success. The partnership board was left in no doubt as to the level of enthusiasm and support that exists for this project in the business community. The key now is to harness that passion, and to identify practical ways in which your company can get involved. Please see below a list of 8 areas of work in which we would particularly welcome your input. We are not seeking a big commitment of time or resource - in many cases simply giving us your opinion would be a great help.

Business Mentoring Programme

- *Providing business support and encouragement to smaller businesses.*
- *Could you become a mentor or a mentee?*

Contact Peter Beech-Allen on peter.beech-allen@gwe.uk.com

Culture & Creative

- *Swindon Cultural Partnership is tasked with improving the cultural offer in Swindon.*
- *Get involved in the renaissance and help us to drive the cultural agenda forward.*

Contact Mike Pringle on mike.pringle@creativeswindon.org.uk

Employment & Skills

- *Developing a local workforce with the right skills base for our economy.*
- *Help us to build a picture of the skills priorities by talking to us about your skills needs.*

Contact Sue Watkins on sue.watkins@lsc.gov.uk

Engaging Young People in Enterprise

- *This project aims to encourage young people to develop their business skills.*
- *Get involved in an Enterprise Day and inspire the business leaders of tomorrow.*

Contact John Bennett on john.bennett@yesw.org.uk

Innovation

- *Stimulating and encouraging innovation amongst Swindon businesses.*
- *Share the benefits of innovation or learn from experienced innovators.*

Contact Peter Beech-Allen on peter.beech-allen@gwe.uk.com

Marketing

- *Improving Swindon's image and promoting the town as an excellent business location.*
- *Become an 'ambassador' for Swindon and help us to put the town back on the map.*

Contact Sinclair Brown on srbrown@swindon.gov.uk

University

- *We are conducting a demand study for a business-focussed university for Swindon.*
- *Meet with us to discuss your current and future higher education skills needs.*

Contact Peter Snowman on psnowman@swindon.gov.uk

Visitor Engagement

- *Improving the visitor offer in Swindon and promoting tourism.*
- *Help us to build a new visitor engagement strategy.*

Contact Sinclair Brown on srbrown@swindon.gov.uk

We are always keen to hear from local businesses. Come and talk to us and see how you can get involved in 'Driving Swindon Forward'.

For further information on the SSEP, and for the latest feedback from the conference, please visit our website www.ssep.org.uk

Internal communication needs to be developed, engaging the two different audiences – internal and external. The Group suggested that Rikki should

send an internal (within the SSEP membership) email every 2 months and an external (outside the SSEP membership) email more often.

Action: Bill Cotton to look at the SSEP's communication programme

Action: MB to take this suggestion to the SSEP Management Team

PBA asked if the attendees were identified by sector.

Action: MS to look at SSEP conference attendees by sector

4) Progress on the Group's priorities:

4.1) Young People and Enterprise

MS talked through the proposals for the Enterprise Days and Enterprise Centre project.

MS informed the group that an organisation called Rotherham Ready (<http://www.rotherhamready.org.uk/>) are far down the line in terms of the enterprise education provision. The group agreed that a visit to Rotherham Ready should be arranged. SC and PM offered to visit Rotherham Ready with DE and JB.

Action: DE to arrange visit

Please see attached papers

Enterprise Days Proposal

It was agreed that funding issues need to be looked at.

Action: DE to look at funding issues

The group agreed with the project in principle, on the condition that various follow-up activities are arranged. Also, it would be easier for the students to improve on a product idea rather than create a new product.

Action: The Enterprise Group will look at ways to involve the students after the Enterprise Days and will feed these suggestions into the Youth into Enterprise Group

Action: DM to contact JB to ensure Young Enterprise have all the delivery resources in place and to request an Implementation Plan.

Enterprise Centre Proposal

The group, whilst acknowledging this was early thinking, agreed that the proposal needs more consideration prior to any feasibility work. The Group requested Young People's Group continues to work up these ideas and present a further paper.

SC added that the Council's new Youth Service headquarters, called 'Platform', at the old Railway Museum should be approached as a possible venue for the Enterprise Centre project.

4.2) Business Networks and Mentoring

PBA informed the group that he would send 2 mailshots out very shortly – 1 to attract mentors and 1 to attract mentees. The target implementation date will be the middle of January. There is enough money for 10 mentors and 10 mentees. PBA added that the project is only resourced until the end of March 2008.

GWE will need to speak to the FSB and Business Link about possible contacts for the programme.

Action: Holly Charlesworth from GWE will contact EF and RW

4.3) Innovation

PBA informed the group that there would be an innovation workshop in March. The facilitators are booked and the marketing of the event will proceed in January. The FSB will be used to help with getting the messages out. MB confirmed that the workshop marketing materials would have to be branded with the SSEP logo.

Action: PBA to provide exact date.

Action: PBA to produce info on project for the new group members

Action: MS to provide PBA with SSEP brand guidelines and logo

DM informed the group that the workshops are the intellectual property of GWE so, if the SSEP decided to do the workshops next year and open the project to tender, the workshops would have to be in a different format to a brief specified by the SSEP management team.

Action: DE to look at Innovation Workshop brief for next year

5) Business Charter

The aim of the project is to link business needs with what the Council can offer.

MB informed the group that he had met with Mike Godfrey (Honda), Celia Carrington (SBC), DM and DE regarding the implementation of the Business Charter. The SSEP will try to get big businesses to buy-in to the Charter while each directorate in the Council will have the charter linked to their objectives.

DM added that the charter would need to be looked at by non-council people, such as EF & SC.

Action: MS will circulate a new draft by Christmas

Action: PM to discuss the Business Charter with the RDA's Policy Team

6) Swindon New Business Competition

MS asked the group whether the competition was a success and whether it should be run next year.

The group agreed that the promotion of the competition was poor and that the Enterprise Group should organise it, as long as each partner embraces the project and makes a commitment to funding. DM added that she would wish Business Link to take a more proactive role in the running of the competition.

Action: DE to draw up proposal for next year's event that includes a summary of required commitments from the group.

There was a general discussion around whether Swindon Business News should sponsor the event and whether it should link in to the Wiltshire Business Awards.

7) Local Procurement

MS informed the group of a website that was implemented earlier this year by Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council called Buy Wiltshire (www.buywiltshire.co.uk). The website is designed to support the development of businesses in Swindon and Wiltshire and to encourage local procurement.

MS asked the group whether the Enterprise Group should take this initiative as one of its priorities. There was a discussion around

promotion of the website and the group agreed that other procurement websites should be promoted as well, for example the London 2012 website (<http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/business-centre/index.php>). The group agreed that there should be a discussion at the next meeting on what the Enterprise Group can offer and a proposal should be drawn up.

Action: DE to put the Buy Wiltshire project on the agenda for the next meeting for a more detailed discussion

8) Any Other Business

- MB asked that the question of whether the group was relevant to SMEs be put on the agenda for the next meeting. It was suggested that another business should be involved with the group.
- MS informed the group of the 'Prowess 5th Annual International Conference' that is taking place on 20-21 February 2008 at the Holiday Inn, Peterborough West. The conference will celebrate the success of women's enterprise development and debate all the current issues. (<http://www.prowess.org.uk/>).
- DM informed the group that GWE is merging with a company based in Bristol called Business West. This will mean that she is unavailable in January and February. DM's new title will be Managing Director, Business Development.

9) Date of Next Meetings

2.00pm, Tuesday 8th January, Beard Construction, Faraday Road
2.00pm, Tuesday 5th February, Beard Construction, Faraday Road
2.00pm, Tuesday 4th March, Beard Construction, Faraday Road
2.00pm, Tuesday 1st April, Beard Construction, Faraday Road
2.00pm, Tuesday 6th May, Beard Construction, Faraday Road