

Swindon Enterprise Group

Note of Meeting held on Tuesday 6th November 2007 at Beard Construction, Faraday Road, Dorcan

In Attendance: Mark Beard, Beard Construction
Roger Wilkins, Business Link
David Evans, Swindon Borough Council
John Bennett, Young Enterprise

Apologies: Peter Beech-Allen, GWE,
Phil Merrick, Innovation Centre and Swindon Chamber of Commerce
Pete Manley, SWRDA
Daphne Milner, GWE (Chair)

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved as an accurate record of the meeting held on 3rd October 2007.

Matters arising:

- 2.1 DE had had no success in speaking to Pom Sandhu from the Federation of Small Businesses.

Action: DE to contact other officials in the FSB.

- 2.2 Honda had replied to MB re the availability of young employees to assist the group, to decline the offer. However, MB reported that Richard Carter from Beard Construction had offered to sit on the Youth Enterprise group in the short term.

Action: DE to forward to Richard Carter (via MB) the arrangements for the next Youth Enterprise meeting.

- 2.3 DE had agreed with Cooperative Futures to make a contribution of £500 towards its Cooperative Conference in the New Year.

2.4 Action: DE to circulate list of forthcoming partnership meetings

3. Business Charter

DE presented the latest draft of the Business Charter, which has been the subject of consultation with relevant officers of the Borough Council. MB pointed out that the Charter needs to push the Council to become more business friendly, possibly with an Action Plan added. The group noted that the revision had moved on significantly from the previous draft.

It was agreed that the Charter would be the subject of informal consultation with key businesses, the Chamber of Commerce and the FSB prior to adoption.

Action: DE to set up a meeting between MB, Mike Godfrey, Celia Carrington and DE to progress the Charter.

4. SSEP Conference

DE outlined the progress to date in the run up to the conference on 14th November. Attendance was up to around 110.

Action: DE to circulate a list of delegates

5. Progress on Group's Priorities

MB reported that at the previous Management Board he had obtained formal approval to progress the three chosen projects, albeit subject to asking the two 'applicants' to shave off some of their costs. The Borough Council will find funding for the projects during the current financial year.

5.1 Young People

JB explained that it may be difficult to progress the Enterprise Days project with the level of financial assistance that has been offered. We await information from Education Business Plus as to whether enhanced funds may be available to enable the project to progress.

The events would be sector based, inviting 4 to 5 key companies in each of the selected sectors to run the event. Part of the day would involve a 'Dragon's Den' event, encouraging the young people to prepare a business case for an idea to present on the day to the businesses. The winning presenter would receive a cash prize for his/her school.

JB/DE to investigate availability of EBPlus funding, and commence delivery of the Enterprise Days project asap.

5.2 Innovation and Mentoring Projects.

In PBA's absence the meeting could not discuss the two agreed projects in any details, though it was agreed that swift progress needs to be made to get on and deliver them. DE argued that he would like to set up a small steering group to oversee the two projects comprising the key players in those areas, namely, UbiS and the Innovation Centre.

Actions

- 1. DE to arrange Steering Group meeting with key players**
- 2. DE to contract with GWE to commence delivery of the projects asap.**

6 Enterprise Week

DE reported that, further to the last meeting's request, he had researched the activities that were due to take place during Enterprise Week. It was his intention to issue a press release summarising the events, to include the Conference, during the week after Enterprise Week.

Action: DE to issue Press Release

DE circulated a 'Pen Picture' of issues in Swindon, including reference to the possible Indicators that might be attributed to the summary. It was agreed that diversification of the business base, and stimulating innovation are priorities, though the group discussed whether targeting growth amongst business sectors should be a valid role. In conclusion it was agreed that the pen picture should emphasise the need to create a culture of overall business growth, albeit with attention given to certain sectors over others.

Action: DE to feed the group's comments into the next draft of the Pen picture, to be discussed at the next Policy Group meeting.

8. Swindon New Business Competition

The three finalists have been selected. Awards will be presented at the end of the SSEP Conference. MB asked to present the awards.

Action: DE to forward to MB details of the three finalists, and to make the necessary presentation arrangements on the day.

9 AOB

None

10 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 4th December