

# Swindon Enterprise Group

## Note of Meeting held on Thursday 23rd April 2009

### Venue - Thring Townsend Lee & Pembertons, Swindon

**In Attendance:** Ramona Derbyshire, Thring Townsend Lee & Pembertons (Chair)  
Tiso Fiaola, Swindon Borough Council  
Rob Harman, Swindon Chamber of Commerce  
Simon Jackson, InSwindon Company  
Neil Reaich, Swindon Borough Council  
Gerry Reilly, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)  
Jessica Vallentine, Business Link  
Phil Merrick, Swindon Borough Council

**Guests:** Tom McInerney, EtherLive  
Steve Richards, Youth Services, Swindon Borough Council

**Apologies:** Samantha Badminton, Legal & General  
Peter Beech-Allen, GWE Business West  
Steve Causer, SwinCity  
Sam McGrath, Lloyds TSB  
Vanda Tanner, OMG Hair & Beauty

#### 1. Minutes of Last Meeting

Agreed as a true reflection of the meeting.

#### 2. Actions Arising

Procurement Event organising group met to discuss recent event. (Action at 3.)  
Youth Enterprise Group members attended focus groups and engaged with Students. (Action at 4.1)

VT, RD & PM met IT Specialist to move forward development of Start-Up Route Map. (Action at 5.1)

#### 3. Youth Services - Introduction

Steve Richards of Youth Services at Swindon Borough Council briefed the group on forthcoming initiatives where an enterprise element could potentially be incorporated.

The fourth annual *Swindon Youth Festival* takes place on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at Old Town Gardens, Swindon. With a focus on 13-19 year olds, the event encompasses music, arts, glamorous and health zones. An additional enterprise zone (possibly in the form of an "Ideas/Enterprise Tent") was considered a good idea and an invitation was extended to the Youth Enterprise Group to attend a forthcoming planning meeting in order to move this forward. NR suggested that the presence of a *Business Link* Adviser and a prize of enterprise support would add value to the enterprise zone.

SR also briefly introduced *The Platform*, the redevelopment of the former Swindon Museum building into a Youth Centre. As this project proceeds, SR agreed to keep the group up to date regarding potential engagement.

**Action: Youth Enterprise Group to discuss *Swindon Youth Festival* opportunities at next meeting.**

#### **4. Local Procurement – Moving Forward**

PM reported that the Procurement Event organising group had met and discussed the positive outcomes and areas where future improvements need to be made in planning and operational areas. The organising group are to meet again shortly to discuss future events with a focus on local public sector procurement e.g. Swindon Borough Council. This will complement Chamber of Commerce activities who are to focus on procurement activity around members and the business community.

#### **5. Youth Enterprise Group**

##### **5.1 Youth Enterprise Challenge Project Event**

RD briefed the group on the recent Focus Group with 10 pupils from St. Joseph's School. (A method, suggested by the School, as a way of engaging with students in order to understand their interests and motivations and, therefore, guide the development of a challenge event.)

Salient findings from discussions with the pupils included lack of interest in the "Dragons Den" format, as utilised in the last event in October 2008. They would like to have a free reign in developing a business idea, will undertake preparation work and prefer an off-site i.e. away from school, venue. RD concluded that pupils were genuinely motivated to compete in a challenge event and highlighted pupils desire to work with local businesses in developing winning ideas.

Youth Enterprise Group will now incorporate Focus Group conclusions in developing the next challenge event. Of importance will be pupils desire for a "free reign".

**Action: Youth Enterprise Group to meet and move forward challenge event planning.**

#### **6. Economic Downturn Projects**

##### **6.1 Start-Up Route Map**

Tom McInerney of EtherLive presented his work on developing a presentation of the Start-Up Route Map. His presentation not only covered the vital element of engaging stakeholders i.e. those organisations and individuals who will form part of the support network, but also the visual format of the map and the procedure users will experience when in use. The use of a traffic light system for identifying priority of tasks was specifically applauded.

All group members were requested to feedback initial reactions, thoughts, suggested improvements etc. to RD within two weeks. She will then collate ideas and feedback to Tom McInerney. It was agreed that initial input from stakeholders and potential users of the map would guide development of a prototype.

RD, on behalf of the group, thanked Tom McInerney for the amount and quality of work undertaken in developing the presentation.

**Action: Group members to feedback thoughts on presentation to RD within 2 weeks.**

**Action: PM to assess initial reactions from potential users.**

**7. Any Other Business**

NR informed the group of his disappointment in no Swindon schools being chosen for a Young Chamber initiative, despite 5 expressing interest. The reason given related to the level of existing young chambers in Swindon. Group members expressed no knowledge of any existing equivalents.

SJ distributed ideas *InSwindon* are considering to use to decorate empty retail units in the town centre. Set 3 were generally preferred which incorporated a mirrored background and hairstyles, which can be tried out by passers-by. TMcI suggested adding a database registration facility via a text number.

RH informed the group that he would be attending a Business Start-Up conference on 29 & 30 May 2009 at the ExCel Centre in London and offered to distribute relevant promotional material to any inward investment enquiries.

JV informed the group that the *Business Link* recession survival guide, in both electronic and hard copy, would be available imminently.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

8.30 a.m. on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at Thring Townsend Lee & Pembertons, Drakes Meadow, Swindon.