

# Swindon Enterprise Group

## Note of Meeting held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008

### Beard Construction, Faraday Road, Dorcan

**In Attendance:** Mark Beard, Beard Construction  
Peter Beech Allen, GWE  
Roger Wilkins, Business Link  
David Evans, Swindon Borough Council (Chair and minutes)  
Pete Manley, SWRDA  
Gerry Reilly, Federation of Small Businesses  
Rob Harman, Morris Owen and Swindon Chamber of Commerce

**Apologies:** Daphne Milner, GWE  
Phil Merrick, Innovation Centre and Swindon Chamber of Commerce  
John Bennett, Young Enterprise  
Steve Causer

#### 1. Minutes of last meeting

Approved as an accurate record of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

#### 2. Matters arising:

- 2.1 Swindon Business Charter:** DE reported that the Charter is due to be considered by the Council's Cabinet and Director's team during the next week. A few amendments have been made by Cabinet, notably in relation to the Procurement section. MB reported that the Charter received good feedback when reported to the SSEP Management Board. He has recently written to Celia Carrington at Swindon Borough Council with a suggested programme to adopt the Charter, including launch of the document in mid June.

RH informed the meeting that the Chamber had adopted the Charter.

**Action: DE to write formally to the FSB asking for it to adopt the Business Charter.**

- 2.2 Local Procurement:** DE reported that he had attended a press conference held by the FSB, which was hosted by the National Chairman, alongside the Branch Chairman (Emma Faramazi). During the meeting DE had agreed to work with the FSB over the forthcoming year on local procurement, and particularly finding tangible ways for Swindon Borough Council to increase its local procurement activities.

#### 3 Progress on the Group's Priorities:

##### 3.1 Young People and Enterprise

DE gave a verbal update on progress in organising the first of the two Enterprise Days, through Young Enterprise. He and John Bennett had last week visited the

STEAM museum and agreed that it would make an excellent venue, for the event to be held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April. Recruitment of schools and business people continues. MB informed the meeting that he had spoken to Mark Suddaby of Newsquest who had agreed to cover the event, and that he would 'consider' sponsoring the event.

**Action: JB to provide written update including a list of business people so far committed and the current vacancies.**

### **3.2 Mentoring Programme**

PBA gave a verbal update of the programme. Marketing commenced in December and a postcard and email campaign is due to be carried out commencing 7<sup>th</sup> March. So far GWE has 3 existing mentors, and has recruited a further 3. PBA was confident that the programme is on track to deliver the required outputs, albeit slightly behind the planned schedule.

### **3.3 Innovation**

PBA gave a verbal update of the programme for the event, which is on track and due to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> March at the STEAM museum. A postcard campaign went out at the end of February.

**Action: All to assist in raising awareness of the event through dissemination of the email to networks.**

3.4 The meeting discussed what the desired outcomes for the projects are, and it was agreed that that debate would usefully be held at the next meeting. Those priorities must stem from business needs but they would also need to have relevance to the Local Area Agreement as well as to emerging funding streams, such as the EU Competitiveness programme, and others' priorities.

#### **Actions:**

- **GR, in consultation with other businesses and business reps on the group, to prepare a paper for the next meeting outlining the main issues and needs amongst small businesses in Swindon.**
- **PM to present report on the EU Competitiveness programme to the next meeting.**
- **PM to feedback on a forthcoming Regional Innovation event**

### **4. New Business Competition**

DE summarised the 2007 competition, saying that although the number of entries was relatively low the actual standard of the top few was very good. The SSEP maximised the opportunities from the competition, using it as a tangible success at the SSEP launch in November.

The meeting agreed to run the competition again in 2008, this time offering a cash prize to the first placed business, and a package of relevant offers to the top three. RW agreed to support the competition by offering a Business Link Start up Workshop to the top three finalists.

#### **Actions:**

- **DE to progress roll out of the New Business Competition, working directly with the FSB to promote it.**
- **GR and RH to seek formal approval of the offer of free membership to the top three finalists.**

## **5. Any Other Business**

### **5.1 New Swindon Company Brochure**

RH circulated a copy of the latest New Swindon Company brochure for information, and will liaise directly with TNSC to encourage them to distribute it electronically amongst Swindon companies.

### **5.2 Migrant Labour Conference**

DE passed around a flier for a conference on 1<sup>st</sup> April for employers which will address the issue of employing migrant labour. It was recognised that getting business attendance may be difficult, and that marketing might be targeted at specific business sectors.

**Action: DE to advise the organiser of the event on sectors that might most likely be interested in the event.**

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

April 29<sup>th</sup> at 1.30

(GR was requested to liaise with relevant businesses and business representative bodies in the meanwhile to draw up the summary of business issues referred to in 3.4 above).