

# Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership

## Policy Task Group

**Friday 7th December 2007 10.00 – 12.00, Premier House  
(Room 2.4), Station Road, Swindon**

### **In Attendance:**

Alan Fletcher, Swindon Chamber of Commerce (Chair)  
Joe Backshell, Swindon Strategic Partnership  
Pete Manley, South West RDA  
Sue Watkins, LSC  
Peter Beech-Allen, GWE  
Stuart Webb, SBC Create  
Ernesto Gómez, SBC Econ Dev  
Peter Snowman, SBC Econ Dev

### **Apologies:**

Jill Annal, Job Centre Plus  
David Evans, SBC Econ Dev (Off Sick)  
Matthew Pearce, SBC Policy (Holidays)

## **1. Notes of Last Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November**

### **Matters Arising:**

JB pointed out the importance of considering the Community Strategy as a framework for the Swindon Economic Strategy, taking also into account other strategies such as the 50 promises and the Equality Policy.

**Action** EG will circulate the mentioned strategies and the Council's 50 promises with an explanatory diagram.

## **2. Local Area Agreement II Update**

After having a telephone conversation with Alison Chamberlain, EG mentioned that the SBC aims to choose the final 35 indicators of the LAA II by February 2008.

## **3. SSEP Priority Areas for LAAll (pen picture document)**

AF explained that the Policy Task Group has a purpose to put into consideration the Swindon Economic Strategy before the management board. This strategy is relevant to the entire local economy and does not solely rely on the LAA II activities and indicators.

PM mentioned two aspects to be taken into account for the strategy and supported by the RDA:

- The information included needs to be based on robust evidence rather than merely local ambitions.
- The inward investment strategy will be highly valued by the Regional Agency and therefore the local strategy should reflect this.

Members noted that Inward Investment was mentioned but it was agreed that it should be included more clearly.

AF highlighted the lack of consideration of transport. PS and SW explained that area has been contemplated by other SBC initiatives. AF and EG outlined the importance of infrastructure to the local economic development of the town centre especially.

**Action** PS will find out about the ownership of the transport topic and possible future links with economic development.

JB also mentioned the importance of including sustainability to the Economic Strategy.

AF suggested including the University Project as part of the Skills and Employment Group as UWE will be guided by an employment led approach. He also asked the group regarding the possibility of accessing current research carried out by the University about the skills gaps in the town.

**Action** PS will find out about the possibility of obtaining a copy of the report from UWE. He will also liaise with the groups that have not yet included their objectives and activities in the Economic Strategy.

SW, PB, PS, EG discussed difficulties for employers in recruiting but who ironically are reluctant to take apprentices that have more training in soft (attitude) and generic skills. This will be a subject to expand on in the Skills and Employment Group.

PBA pointed out that the Major Employers, Marketing and Culture sections did not contain any detail of activities.

**Action** PS to ask Rikki Hunt/ Sinclair Brown/ Mike Pringle to complete their sections.

#### **4. Research & Intelligence needs of the SSEP**

PS asked the members to group to consult their respective SSEP groups regarding research and intelligence needs. PS and EG will directly produce and/or indirectly coordinate the production of relevant annual assessment and quarterly reports.

EG has announced to the group about the recent publication of the technical guide of the LAA II.

**Action** PM, JB, SW, PB, and SW to consult regarding the research needs based on a briefing document provided by EG and PS.

EG and PS will:

- Circulate the previous Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Assessment.

- Brief other group leaders not represented in the Policy Task Group such as Marketing Group.
- Correct the 'pen picture' document and forward to the Management Board by the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> December.
- Invite Bill Cotton in order to report back to the policy group.

**Action** EG will circulate the terms of reference of the group and bring some physical copies of various documents such as the technical guide of the LAA II.

**5. Any Other Business**

None

**6. Date of Next Meeting:**

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 10:00, Swindon Borough Council Premier House