

Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership

SSEP Policy Group Notes of Meeting held on 10th March 2008

In Attendance:

Alan Fletcher, Swindon Chamber of Commerce (Chair)
Ernesto Gómez, SBC Econ Dev
David Evans, SBC Econ Dev
Matthew Pearce, SBC Policy
Lynn Forrester, SBC, Sustainability
Gesa Reiss, Great Western Community Forest
Amanda Timms, Nationwide
Caroline Hallett, Nationwide

Apologies:

Jill Annal, Job Centre Plus
Pete Manley, South West RDA
Stuart Webb, SBC Create
Sue Watkins, LSC
Peter Beech-Allen, GWE

1. Background to the SSEP and the Policy Group

DE gave a brief overview of the SSEP, including its structure and the aims and membership of each of the Sub Groups. He then introduced the Policy Group, explaining its status as a task group, and its role to provide a policy steer to the Management Board, undertaking research, providing responses to partners' consultation documents, and preparing strategies.

2. Notes of Last Meeting on 7th December 2007

The notes were approved as an accurate record.

3. Local Area Agreement Update

MP gave an update on progress in drafting the LAA II, and circulated a summary of all 29 indicators selected by the Swindon Strategic Partnership to date. Negotiations are ongoing with the Government Office over which indicators should be included, and it was noted that NI117, NI153 and NI164 have been agreed within the Economic Development and Enterprise block. Week commencing 31st March is the deadline for agreeing which indicators to include in the agreement.

4. Other recent policy guidance & consultations

DE reported two items of relevance

Firstly the South West RDA had recently consulted local partners on its Corporate Plan. The SSEP Management Board had considered a proposed reply on behalf of the partnership, which was submitted to the Agency at the end of February [*copy of the submission attached*].

Secondly, conversations have been progressing at the Regional level over implementing the Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration, though guidance is still awaited from the Government on progressing it through legislation.

5. Creating a Zero-Carbon Economy in Swindon

DE introduced this item, reporting that at its last meeting the Management Board requested the Policy Group to consider how the partnership might best address the subject of Working towards a zero carbon economy in Swindon. He suggested that the role of this group is to come up with a set of recommendations on how progress this issue, to be reported back to the Management Group.

DE referred to a recent Local Government Information Unit publication, titled '*Greening Growth: how local government can build the green economy*' [enclosed with these minutes]

Following much discussion the following points were agreed:

- The objectives should be realistic and deliverable, yet ambitious, aimed at reducing carbon dependency rather than creating a zero carbon economy.
- If the subject is to get the buy-in from businesses, it is important that it is commercially focussed, pointing out the business opportunities alongside the environmental benefits.
- A dedicated 'greening business' group needs to form to take ownership of the subject, and reporting directly into the Management Board

A subgroup was asked to consider the Terms of Reference for a 'Greening Economic Growth' group, and to report back to the next meeting.

Action: LF, AT and DE to meet separately to draft a terms of reference for the group.

6. Any Other Business

EG spoke about the Swindon Economic Assessment, which is currently in preparation, explaining that the document is to be aligned to the information needs of each of the SSEP Sub Groups. He asked members for their views on what information they would like to see in the Assessment.

Action: EG to present a draft of the Economic Assessment at the next meeting.

7. Date of Next Meeting

DE to arrange during first week of April

