

Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership Management Board Meeting

Notes of Meeting held on
Thursday 21st February 2008

Present: Rikki Hunt – Cipol Energy Ltd, Chair
Mark Beard – Beard Construction
John Davies – Thring Townsend
Bill Cotton – SBC
Gavin Calthrop - SBC
Mike Pringle – Swindon Cultural Partnership
Robin Bailey - Nationwide
Cllr Phil Young – SBC
David Evans – SBC

Apologies: Steve Richards - SWRDA

1 **Notes of last meeting**

Notes of 20 December 2007 were agreed.

Actions brought forward:

GC to circulate a schedule of communications activity for Board approval

2 **South West RDA Corporate Plan**

DE presented a broad outline of the Draft Corporate Plan, and then went through a proposed response from the SSEP to the RDA, noting that the SSEP is broadly in agreement with the Plan.

The meeting discussed the proposed response in detail and agreed various changes.

Action: DE to incorporate the Board's views into an amended submission, to be forwarded to the RDA.

3 **Creating a Carbon-neutral Economy in Swindon**

DE introduced the paper, explaining that addressing climate change is becoming increasingly recognised as a priority for Swindon, including by the Borough Council and the RDA, and that the SSEP needs to respond accordingly. The Board agreed and tasked the Policy Group to consider the steps that might be taken to address climate change locally, working through businesses to achieve a carbon neutral economy in Swindon.

Action: The Policy Group to consider the issue and prepare a

strategy and action plan for the Management Board's approval (DE).

4 Securing a New University in Swindon

BC outlined progress to date in attracting the University of the West of England to Swindon, noting that a report has recently been produced, which concludes that there is a demand for a university in Swindon. The next steps are firstly to develop a funding proposal to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The SSEP has an important role to continue building support for the university, including through financial commitment, and to ascertain business demand for HE services. The second step is to address the actual cost and location of a university building.

It was recognised that provision of a university ties in closely to provision of a new Innovation centre in order to maintain the priority placed upon stimulating a culture of innovation.

Action: BC to circulate Consultant's report to all Board members

5 Enterprise Days Project

DE circulated a paper on this subject and introduced the item, providing an update on progress in delivering the Enterprise Days project. The first of the two events, for 14-16 year olds will be held at STEAM on 25th April. The project now needs business people to put themselves forward as either subject specific mentors, or as 'Dragons', on the day.

Action: All to consider business people to volunteer either as mentors or as 'Dragons'.

6 Draft Marketing Communications Proposal

RB introduced the paper on behalf of the Marketing Group, saying that the proposal aims to produce a business plan to guide the effective use of the Borough Council's marketing budget, which has partners' buy-in. It was recognised that that business plan ties in closely to the impending Visioning work.

The group agreed the paper and discussed it at length, including the need for an effective website, the need to obtain Swindon people's recognition of the message through PR, and the need to produce a single, effective brand for Swindon that has all the partners' buy-in.

The business plan needs to present a clear marketing package, to which partner organisations can then be asked to contribute. It also needs to identify a single spokesperson for Swindon who can communicate the brand. It was suggested that Gavin Jones might be ideally placed to fulfil that role.

Actions:

- 1. Visioning to be itemised on the next agenda (BC)**
- 2. Mapping exercise to be prepared identifying the main bodies**

who currently undertake marketing on behalf of Swindon, and a view of how they can be tied in to the Marketing Group (DE).

7 Update on LAAll

BC gave a verbal update on the latest situation with regard to selection of the 28 indicators that will form the Economic Development Block of the LAA II. It was recognised that economic development has an impact on many of the indicators, and that the group has a role to influence those of relevance in other blocks.

Action: BC to produce a simple guide to the LAA

8 Swindon Business Charter

MB explained that the Charter is intended to create a better relationship between businesses and the local authority, recognising the impact that Borough Council decisions and processes have on businesses. The Charter is also a sales tool for use in marketing Swindon to potential investors.

It was noted that Beard Construction, Morris Owen, GWE and Honda have already expressed a commitment to sign up to the Charter once it has been adopted by the Council.

PY mentioned that the Charter will inevitably change and evolve over time, and that one of the challenges on business partners is to identify ways to update the charter in due course.

GC requested that the Charter goes through the Council's Design team prior to publication.

Action:

- **All to identify 10 businesses to sign up to the Charter in preparation for the launch in April.**
- **JD to ask the Swindon Chamber to sign up to the Charter.**
- **DE to oversee finalisation of the Charter, including design and launch**

8 Any Other Business

Swindon College

MB raised the issue of Swindon College's recent poor Ofsted report. The LAA has an important role to play in improving the performance of partners, such as the College.

Governance

Agreed to defer this item to the next meeting

Action: Item to be forwarded on to next agenda

Chamber Dinner

DE informed the Board that the SSEP has purchased a table for ten at the Chamber Dinner, to be held on 15th March. Members of the Board are invited to take the places.

Action: DE to circulate a note on the Dinner.

6 **Date of Next meeting:**
7.30 am, Thursday 17th April 2008

Venue:
Committee Room 2, Civic Offices