

## Swindon Business Charter explained

### **What is the background to the development of the Charter?**

Following a period when Swindon business and Swindon Borough Council worked in relative isolation of each other, both have recently benefited from a period of more open engagement. Swindon Borough Council is keen to build on this progress and the development of the Business Charter is a clear signal to the business community that businesses are the driver of Swindon's growth agenda, and that open communication and engagement is of paramount importance to both parties.

### **What is the Business Charter?**

The Business Charter is a 6 page document which lays down the service standards that Swindon businesses can expect from Swindon Borough Council, and, equally, the consideration that businesses should give to the local community from which they draw resources. The charter forms part of a broader dialogue Swindon Borough Council has embarked upon with the business community.

### **How committed is Swindon Borough Council to the Charter?**

The Borough Council's Cabinet and its Director's Team actively support the drive to deliver a better service to the Swindon business community. They have adopted the Charter and are committed to championing it within the Council. Delivering clear improvements in service to the business community will, where relevant, form part of senior officers' annual performance objectives and we will monitor progress annually by seeking structured feedback from Swindon businesses. We aim to create a small group of business champions who can work with colleagues across the Council to develop a more business friendly approach. We will commit resources to their development, to ensure that they have a good understanding of business needs.

### **How committed are Swindon businesses to the Charter?**

Individual businesses worked closely with the Borough Council on the drafting and adoption of the Charter., under the auspices of the Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership (a partnership of business and public sector leaders). The signatories who have each contributed a small amount to the formal launch are:-

- South West RDA
- Honda
- Nationwide
- Beard Construction
- Thring Townsend
- Morris Owen
- Great Western Enterprise
- Swindon Chamber of Commerce
- Federation of Small Businesses (Swindon Branch)

### **How will improvement in service be measured?**

The private sector sponsors of the charter have already rated the Swindon Borough Council services detailed in the charter. Partners will be given a similar opportunity at the charter's launch. These scores will be collated and used as a benchmark to measure progress against the Charter's objectives. Each year all signatories to the charter will be asked to rate the quality of service received from the Borough Council and highlight areas for improvement.

### **How can you help?**

There are a variety of ways you can help:-

- Publicly sign up to the charter, consider what practical steps your business can take to make Swindon a better place to do business.
- Provide feedback to the Chief Executive of Swindon Borough Council on how you feel the Council is working to fulfil the standards set out in the Charter

Get involved with the Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership