

Visit Swindon Group
Tuesday 5th February 2008, 9:30am
Brunel Tower – 4th Floor Board Room

MINUTES

Present:

Sinclair Brown (SB) - Swindon Borough Council
Matt Spencer (MS) - Swindon Borough Council
Danielle Walker (DW) - Swindon Borough Council
Nick Williams (NW) - Swindon Designer Outlet
Hellen Barnes (HB) - STEAM
Alan Greer (AG) - STEAM
Janice Leard (JL) - Tourist Information Centre
Emma Valentine (EV) - Lydiard House
Laura Hunt (LH) - Old Town Traders Association
Sally Pettipher (SP) - Science Museum Swindon
Stephenie Tully (ST) - inSwindon
Joanna Heaven (JH) - Swindon College

Apologies:

Alun Williams (AW) - Wiltshire Tourism Partnership
Nicki Western (NW) - Swindon Borough Council

SSEP Overview

SB began the meeting with an introduction to the Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership (SSEP) and where the Visitor Engagement Group sits within its structure.

Please see the SSEP website for more details: www.ssep.org.uk

Swindon Marketing Group Outline

SB gave an overview of the Swindon Marketing Group and informed the group that the role of the group is to:

To create life long customers for Swindon by: improving Swindon's image; developing and delivering marketing activity; creating key

messages and resources for organisations to adopt; and building a strong, clear, consistent, relevant and well-managed image.

SB informed the group that the Glasgow branding model is being looked at by the Marketing Group as a potential framework for marketing Swindon. It is important for the Visitor Engagement Group to feed into the process so it was decided that the group would come up with its own idea of the model.

Action: Group to feedback ideas for the Swindon Visitor Model based on the Glasgow Model to be submitted to Economic Development Team by 26th February

Post-Meeting Note

The English Tourist Board has adopted a definition of tourism as the short term movement of people away from their normal place of residence or work.

Visit Wiltshire Tourism Partnership Overview

SB gave an overview of the Visit Wiltshire Tourism Partnership, which Swindon is an active member of. This partnership aims to be the voice of and for tourism within the county and is currently developing a tourism website where Swindon will have its own channel. Please see www.visitswindon.co.uk for more details.

Visitor Engagement Group

Role and Purpose

The role and purpose was set up as *“to increase visitor numbers in areas of business tourism, conferencing, shopping and leisure”*. However, this was thought to be too specific for the group so, with other options also discussed, the new role and purpose of the group was suggested as:

Attracting and retaining tourism activity for Swindon

This includes:

- Dwell time

- Return visits
- Visitor spend
- Attracting and retaining tourism activity in all sectors:
 - Businesses
 - Residents
 - Leisure
 - Friends and family

Action: SB to propose revised terms of reference to include the new simple role and purpose of the group

It was decided that the name for the group would be changed from the Visitor Engagement Group to the Visit Swindon Group.

Aims

The aims of the group were discussed. Potential aims could be the better signposting and info on events and to stop people going elsewhere. Related to the signposting of events, it was suggested that a global calendar could be produced, containing information on events, town centre markets etc.

Other key areas are for the group to:

- Develop a coordinated approach to tourism activity
- Be the focal point for tourism activity
- Feed into plans to develop tourism in Swindon

Tourism Information

MS gave an overview of the tourism information that the Economic Development Team currently have access to. These include:

- Value of Tourism Report – Wiltshire
- Swindon's Top 5 Tourist Attractions
- PKF Monthly UK Hotel Trends
- Local Area Agreement Postal Survey

Information on visitor numbers was requested. NW added that the Swindon Designer Outlet had recently undertaken a visitor survey, and offered to share information on this. The survey found that 53% of visitors to the Swindon Designer Outlet are local, with most of the remainder originating from within 30-60 minutes drive time (e.g. Bath, Bristol, Oxford and Reading)

Visitor and Conference Guides

DW gave an overview of the production of tourism guides by the Economic Development Team. 3 guides are being produced: an A5 visitor guide; an A4 conference directory; and a pocket guide. DW informed the group that the aim was for the guides to be completed by the end of March.

Next Meetings

It was decided that the group should meet regularly, for the next 6 months, at 10:00am on Tuesdays. If possible these meetings will be held in places like Lydiard Park, Steam and Old Town to help to increase awareness of particular areas and attractions we are trying to promote.

Post-Meeting Note – The next meeting was rearranged to the 19th March, due to confusion over the previously agreed date. Monthly meetings were proposed but we have arranged meetings every 6 weeks to allow for sufficient time for actions etc.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 19th March 2008, 3pm – Swindon Borough Council offices, Premier House, Station Road, SN1 1TZ

Other Meeting Dates Proposed:

- Tuesday 29th April 2008, 10am (venue tbc)
- Tuesday 10th June 2008, 10am (venue tbc)
- Tuesday 22nd July 2008, 10am (venue tbc)
- Tuesday 2nd September, 10am (venue tbc)