



## ENTERPRISING BRITAIN 2007 ENTRY FORM

### Section I: General information

#### 1. Applicant's details

<b>Name of participating organisation:</b> <i>(Wording to be used in publicity)</i>	Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership
<b>Postal address:</b>	Swindon Borough Council Economic Development Directorate Premier House Station Road Swindon SN1 1TZ
<b>Website address:</b>	<a href="http://www.maketheconnection.co.uk">www.maketheconnection.co.uk</a>
<b>Contact person (name and title):</b>	David Evans Economic Development Manager
<b>Telephone:</b>	01793 466421
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#### 2. Please give a brief description of your organisation

*maximum 100 words*

The Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership (SSEP) was set up in 2006 to lead on the delivery of the headline Local Area Agreement aim to assert Swindon as the *The UK's Best Business Location*.

The SSEP brings together the many organisations engaged in addressing Economic Development in Swindon alongside private companies, including the large

companies in Swindon, and business representative bodies.

The SSEP is directly charged with the delivery of the Economic Development & Enterprise block of the LAA, and in doing so has coordinated the many successful activities that were being delivered to create enterprise alongside an exciting new agenda of business growth and innovation.

## Section II: The Project

This section deals with the degree of entrepreneurial initiatives your organisation has undertaken, how the initiative is being implemented and its benefits to the city, town, place or area.

### 1. Project details

<b>Project name:</b> <i>(Wording to be used in publicity)</i>	<b>Swindon: Creating the UK's Best Business Location</b>
<b>Project timing:</b>	2006 to 2026

### 2. Description of the project

Provide a description of the project *maximum 1350 words*

The description should include:

- Background to the project and summary of the challenges faced
- A description of the business strategy behind the project
- An explanation as to why the approach was innovative
- Information about how the project was implemented
- Details about the impact the project has had and the results achieved
- Details of any stakeholders or partners you worked with
- Details of future plans/growth/collaboration

#### **Background to the project and summary of the challenges faced**

When Swindon's railway works closed in 1986, the town could easily have sunk into mass unemployment due to the large proportion of Swindon's workforce that depended on the works for employment – around 11,000 during its heyday. New inward investors, including Honda, Rover and Nationwide Building Society, however, brought major manufacturing and office facilities to the town, and in doing so, put Swindon on the road to major economic and physical transformation.

With its ideal location in the centre of the South of England, its mainline rail links direct to London and the South West, and its first class road infrastructure, Swindon has great strengths as an investment location. Within the past decade large employers in both the public and private sector have been attracted to Swindon, giving the town unprecedented economic success, with the fourth highest GVA per employee in the UK.

The growth of small business has also been crucial to that turn around, and Swindon

now has a successful, diverse business community.

Yet whilst Swindon has seen unprecedented economic success that wealth has not trickled down to all sections of the population; sections of the community have low educational attainment levels; many experience long-term unemployment and draw upon income support, while others face barriers accessing employment and taking full part in the success story. Stimulating enterprise – be it in mainstream or social enterprises – offers an opportunity for many to escape that economic exclusion

### **A description of the business strategy behind the project**

Swindon was successful in 2005 in securing inclusion in the second round of Local Area Agreements. With its headline message to assert Swindon as the ‘UK’s Best Business Location’, the LAA places enterprise at the heart of Swindon’s future. The Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership (SSEP) was set up and charged with the delivery of the Economic Development & Enterprise block of the LAA (for further details go to [www.swindonlaa.org.uk](http://www.swindonlaa.org.uk)).

The town has an exciting and dynamic agenda of growth ahead, planning 35,000 new households over the period to 2026. That ambitious growth provides Swindon with the opportunity to build on its heritage of innovation and economic diversification, to become a regional centre delivering high quality services, and generating 32,000 additional high quality employment opportunities in new and emerging industrial sectors and dynamic businesses.

One of the SSEP’s first activities was the adoption of the Swindon Economic Development Vision and Framework (2007 – *The Vision and Framework enclosed with this document*), which considers the strategic growth of Swindon over the period to 2026. It describes an ambitious scenario of sustainable and ‘Smart’ economic growth across the following four building blocks:

- Business Creation and Growth
- Regenerating and Creating Places
- Improving Swindon’s Image and Culture
- Raising Skills and Labour Market Participation

### **Details of any stakeholders or partners you worked with**

The SSEP is led by the private sector alongside all of the main players involved in economic development from the public and community sectors, plus those projects that are recognised as having the opportunity to transform Swindon’s future. These include:

Private Sector: the Federation of Small Businesses, the new Swindon Chamber of Commerce, individual large and small businesses

Public Sector: Swindon Borough Council, the South West England Regional Development Agency, Business Link, the Learning and Skills Council, Job Centre Plus, Young Enterprise, schools, the FE and HE sector.

Community Sector: Social Enterprises, Youth Service, Swindon Learning Partnership  
Transformational Projects: National Science Museum, the New Swindon Company.

### **An explanation as to why the approach was innovative**

The Swindon LAA sits at the heart of the project, and its real point of difference is its aim to make Swindon ‘The UK’s Best Business Location’. The partnership has placed the needs of today’s **and future** businesses at the heart of Swindon’s long

term growth. This approach has gained the respect and buy-in to the SSEP of many agencies including, importantly, the big global companies that are based in Swindon.

### **Information about how the project was implemented**

Stimulating a long term culture of innovation and enterprise underlines all of the SSEP's activities, and a major programme of business focussed activities are being set in motion to enable it to happen

- Creating opportunities for small businesses in the regeneration of the town centre. In partnership with Swindon Borough Council, SWRDA and English Partnerships, the New Swindon Company is leading a radical transformation of the town centre. The transformation will create massive opportunities for small retailers and other small businesses, an opportunity that has been strengthened this year by businesses voting in favour of a designated Business Improvement District.
- Focussing on engendering a spirit of enterprise amongst disadvantaged groups. At St. Joseph's School, for example, (a school in Swindon that has achieved Business and Enterprise Status) a dedicated Marketing and Media suite has been established to enable pupils to offer commercial services to local businesses and encourage them to become entrepreneurs. The Small Business Hub at the University of Bath in Swindon supports local small businesses through programmes, such as the Women in Business scheme, offering training, mentoring and support to many businesswomen who have subsequently started their own business.
- Working through sector based groups and networks to encourage enterprise and innovation within and between businesses. Swindon's Media Forum is actively supported by a large number of Audio Visual, arts and media related companies, pooling skills and sharing expertise in order to push the media sector forward as a driving economic force in Swindon. The Swindon Innovation Centre focuses upon developing new and fledgling businesses in information and communications technology sectors. The Centre opened in 2003 and has a tremendous success rate with 80% of the 42 former and current clients still in business
- Celebrating success. The Swindon New Business Competition is an opportunity to showcase new business talent in Swindon, and to give financial and other support to new entrepreneurs. The award ceremony is held during the annual national Enterprise Week alongside a series of activities throughout the town to stimulate an enterprise culture.

### **Details about the impact the project has had and the results achieved**

Over the past 10 years the culture of enterprise in Swindon has grown dramatically, with the number of businesses in the town growing by 28.6%, the highest increase in the South West and higher than the Great Britain average. Furthermore, between 1994 and 2005 the difference in the self-employment rate between Swindon and Great Britain and the South West narrowed considerably. Longevity and sustainability has also been important and the number of Swindon businesses that survive past their first year is significantly better than the regional and national rates.

Businesses have bought into the project, for example, by voting to set up a Business Improvement District company in the town centre. More and more local businesses are actively looking to take part in projects in Swindon, such as the national

Corporate Games in 2006 and its follow up Community Games in 2007. Over £3m has been contributed by local companies towards the National Science Museum's 'Inspired' project.

#### **Details of future plans/growth/collaboration**

Swindon has been extremely successful in achieving a turn around in its economic fortunes, and enterprise has been at the heart of that success. With its focus on creating the 'UK's Best Business Location' the Swindon LAA sets the challenge of capturing that success to benefit everyone in Swindon, delivering a radical programme of economic inclusion to accompany its economic prosperity. Activities that will be introduced in the near future will include:

- Introducing a business-to-business mentoring programme to enable the senior figures in many of Swindon's successful businesses to offer advice and guidance to new entrepreneurs.
- An innovative Economic Inclusion project, which seeks to apply the town's business success to the needs of Swindon's deprived communities.
- Building the capacity of social enterprises to become deliverers of mainstream services across the public and private sectors.
- Engaging the business community further in major projects, such as attracting a new university to Swindon.
- A comprehensive marketing programme to raise Swindon's national and international profile as an investment location as well as a destination to live and visit, under the working title 'Destination Swindon'.

### **3. Third-party endorsement**

Please attach an endorsement letter from an independent person e.g. an eminent local figure, local entrepreneur or academic, who is not directly involved in the submitted project. The letter should include an overview of why they are supporting the bid and why they believe the bid deserves to win. *Maximum 2 pages*

### **4. Attachments (optional)**

Please submit visual or audiovisual material that promotes your project. This material will help the jury to understand your bid but will not form part of the scoring.  
*Maximum weight: 500g*

## **Section III: Entrant agreement**

**Please complete Section III, to confirm that you are content for the project to be considered for entry in the Enterprising Britain 2007 competition and the European Enterprise Awards 2007.**

As a representative of the project:-

- I agree that the project may be submitted for entry in the Enterprising Britain 2007 competition
- I agree that the project may also be submitted for entry in the 2007 European Enterprise Awards
- I declare the material submitted in the entry is a true and correct reflection of the project
- I agree to have the project publicised in connection with the competition and information about it distributed to the media

<b>Name of representative:</b>	David Evans
<b>Title/function:</b>	Economic Development Manager
<b>Date:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2007
<b>Signature:</b>	

**Please send the completed and signed application form to:**

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**Tel : 0117 9330282**

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