

Present:

Helen Thompson – Chair Voluntary Action Swindon (VAS)  
 Rebecca McKenzie SBC  
 Caroline Cooper SBC/VAS  
 Mutsai Hove Bird Carers Association  
 Alison Chamberlain Swindon Borough Council

Apologies:

Joe Backshell Swindon Coalition of Disabled People and SSP

Meeting decisions:

1	<p><b>The vision:</b>  <b>We will have fairness and equality at the centre of everything we do. We will encourage all members of our community to participate fully in, and take responsibility for, the quality of life in our Borough.</b></p>
2	<p><b>Priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an environment that people want to contribute to by:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Respect for all - treating people with dignity and respect through openness and transparency of decision making both in the Council and in our communities.</li> <li>○ Leading by example - the Council will be a strong community leader and provide engaging community leadership in our neighbourhoods.</li> <li>○ Better access to services and better communication – we will ensure that our modes of communication engage not just inform.</li> <li>○ Being able to influence the services we receive through more diverse representation by individuals and groups.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Delivery:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the diversity of those standing for election as Councillors, by helping local people from all backgrounds to become enthusiastic about participating in local democratic processes.</li> <li>• De-mystify local democratic procedures by making them more inclusive, and easier to understand and participate in.</li> <li>• Establish a common strategy and protocol around access to services both from the Council and from our community and voluntary sector groups.</li> </ul>

Discussion notes:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After introductions, it was agreed to use the Terms of Reference as the agenda and task list.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group thought about the title of the theme and decided that they thought 'Fairness for All' might be a better title.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group discussed the vision from the conference and decided that it shouldn't be about global communities, it should be about local communities. They also looked at the priorities and thought they would expand on them to make them more locally focussed.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There was a discussion about the Council's strong leadership role and also the role of community leaders and the fragmented communities in Swindon.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The group talked about community leaders of the future and the new qualification in community leadership that they are trying to get the University of Bath in Swindon to offer.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversity of councillors group was discussed along with the visibility of councillors in the neighbourhoods. They felt that Councillors should better represent their communities. The group felt that there was a certain amount of mystery around the processes one had to go through to become an elected member.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There was a discussion about community engagement and accessing of services both in the Council and in the community.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They also talked about how in some sectors of the Council, ie: Children's Services, they have a Youth Forum and also have youth members who attend their Partnership Board meetings, and felt that participation should be encouraged more.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Next steps:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The work done tonight will form the basis of a document that will go out to consultation for 3 months.</li><li>○ Feedback from the consultation will be pulled together and presented at the next Strategic Partnership Conference in June 07.</li><li>○ Publication of the strategy will take place around Oct/Nov 07.</li></ul></li></ul>