

Feedback From Swindon Strategic Partnership Conference 8th February 2008 – University of Bath in Swindon, Oakfield Campus

This conference was due to take place in December of 2007, however, due to emerging Government legislation around the second round of Local Area Agreement (LAA) negotiations, we felt that it would be more beneficial for partners and stakeholders if we waited until the start of the New Year.

With this in mind the conference was structured around:

- Launch of the new Community Strategy
- Local Area Agreements (LAA) – both the existing Agreement and the new Agreement, which is due to be launched in June 08.
- 'Market Place' session with Chairs of the LAA Blocks
- Share Fair sessions

Launch of the new Community Strategy

Swindon's new Community Strategy, A Shared Vision for Swindon was launched at the conference. The document was collated from information collected from an extensive consultation that took place during the summer of 2007. The consultation took the form of roadshows around Swindon, face to face meetings with established voluntary & community groups, on-line questionnaire and feedback from partners and stakeholders both in the public and private sector.

Roderick Bluh Chair of Swindon's Partnership Board and Leader of the Council launched the vision at the conference and told the delegates that this strategy really does reflect the aspirations and hopes of the people of Swindon and that he looked forward to working with a whole range of local organisations and people to bring the vision to life so that we can create a Swindon that we will all be proud of.

LAA 1

The chairs of the 4 blocks of the existing Local Area Agreement talked to the delegates about how things were going in LAA1 – they shared both the good news stories and the things that had not gone so well during the last two years.

LAA2

Matt Gott, Director of Policy, Performance & Communication addressed the delegates about how we are moving forward on LAA2

Matt's session led on to a 'Market Place' session which gave delegates the opportunity to talk to the chairs of the LAA blocks and ask them why they had picked the particular indicators they had to support LAA2. This was a very lively and informative session. The chairs of the blocks were challenged and because of the discussions that took place during this session, one or two different indicators have now been included in the LAA2 final submission.

Keynote Speaker: Simon Hughes, Audit Commission.

Simon talked to delegates about the importance of a good community strategy and how to get public, partners & stakeholders involved in owning the strategy, keeping it alive and moving it forward. Simon was described as the 'star of the show' in feedback received about the day.

Share Fair Sessions:

Delegates were asked to pick 2 sessions to attend during the afternoon. These sessions were well attended with very positive feedback. Share fair sessions included:

- Swindon Strategic Partnership – how it works and how you can help to move it forward
- Community Cohesion – Myth Busting
- Third Sector Commissioning
- Connecting People - Connecting Places
- Why Arts & Culture is important to a community
- Climate Change Action Plan – update

The general feedback from the Conference was positive with comments like:

- Enormously informative, Well organised
- Informal – lots of time to network
- Interesting Presentations

Opportunities for improvement for the next conference included:

- More time for discussion with Chairs of the Blocks
- Keep presentations short
- Make LAA feedback more focussed.

The delegates also came up with several ideas for agenda items for forthcoming conference as well as ideas for 'Share Fair' sessions in the future.

This conference was very well attended with around 140 delegates and we had more feedback from this conference than any other. All sectors took part in the conference, below there is a breakdown of how different groups were represented.

Groups	No. of Delegates
Statutory Organisations (Councils/Police/PCT/Hospital/Fire/Probation & Speakers)	48
Government Orgs (GOSW/SWRDA/LSC/DWP/Env Agency)	10
Elected Councillors (Parish/SBC & Other)	17
Community Groups (Vol&Comm Grps/Churches/Env Groups)	52
Business	11

We are currently drafting a programme for the next conference – watch the website and your mailbox for more information.