

SSP OVERVIEW & MONITORING PLUS GROUP MEETING
Minutes of Meeting – 13th January 2009

Tom Charnock (TC)	(Chair)	Marilyn Beale (MB)	Penhill Community Group
Matt Gott (MG)	SBC	James Griffin (JG)	SBC
Geoffrey Lutaaya (GL)	VAS	Lynn Forrester (LF)	SBC
Alison Chamberlain (AC)	SBC	Pam Gough (PG)	SBC
Janet Beattie (JB)	SBC	David Dewart (DD)	SBC
Paul Gregory (PG)	Equalities Rep	Stella Milsom (SM)	GOSW
Cllr Brian Mattock (BM)	SBC	Peter Giles (PeG)	Capita
Dr. Mike Pringle (MP)	Swindon Cultural Partnership	Neil Pullen (NP)	WWT
Ram Thiagarajah (RT)	Interfaith Partnership	Fidelma Meehan (FM)	Bahai Faith
Judith Hawkins (JH)	Anglican Community	Steve Flavin (SF)	Churchfields School

Apologies for Absence:

Steve Henderson	Faith Representative	John Brownlee	SWAP Group
Sylvia Brown	ACRE	Steve Richards	SWRDA

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTIONS
1	<p><u>Minutes and matters arising</u></p> <p>Minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed off as a true record.</p> <p>TC gave an overview of the purpose for the OMG Plus meetings. He welcomed new people onto the group and looked forward to an interesting, informative meeting.</p>	
2	<p><u>Connecting People Connecting Places:</u> Matt Gott, Director of Policy, Performance and Communications revisited the presentation that had been updated following the meeting in December 2008.</p> <p>At the last meeting the group asked for a slide to be included around the drivers for change, this has now been included although the group thought that if we also link connecting people connecting places to the vision for Swindon there would be more context and the concept would be easier for people to grasp.</p> <p>MG asked for feedback on the slides, they were generally around language, perception and running order. MB talked about neighbourhoods and how a community defines its own neighbourhood, she felt that if we want to get people involved in local decision making then the cluster areas were too big.</p>	MG

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JH had concerns around equality between clusters. She raised the issues of benefits and access to services being the same throughout. She also raised the point about us being 'One Swindon' rather than a series of clusters and felt that we should be raising the profile of Swindon and being proud to be a Swindonian.. SF asked about the members role in connecting people connecting places. JH asked who will monitor the work in the clusters and who will scrutinise the work of the ward Councillors. MG talked about their democratic legitimacy and their role in the project, he confirmed that there will be a programme of training and development for all members to ensure they are up to speed. The group noted that Councillors will be under greater scrutiny from their voters.

MG talked about the 'top down' delivery we have in place at the moment and the need for change. We need to make public services more locally sensitive and gave the joined up services around children's services as an example of how this is already working in Swindon. He talked about the need for good services delivery based on local knowledge for better outcomes for communities within Swindon.

MG talked about the need to build up social capital around the Borough and although things work well in some neighbourhoods, there are other areas that are disconnected from civic life. We need to build up a relationship of equals and help communities to do more for themselves. MB added that as long as there are sensible, logical discussions and decisions then people will become more engaged.

The group agreed with the cluster forums, but had some concerns over how they will operate. MB talked about her experiences good and bad with local area panels in the past. MG re-iterated that cluster forums will work together with pre-existing groups and encourage them to get around the table to discuss any issues, celebrate successes, look at bigger issues and influence decisions in that area.

There was a discussion around funding for the clusters, MG confirmed that this avenue was still being explored. LF suggested that we could explore the 'external funding' avenues to help support clusters.

SF talked about schools being at the heart of communities and how difficult it was to group areas together. MB thought that by clustering areas like Old Town/Lawn with Parks/Walcot would be a good idea as both areas could learn lessons from each other.

FM talked to the group about embracing new approaches, starting small and working up – the more we do the more we learn. She talked about the Bahai project in Swindon schools.

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	<p>PG asked if the clusters would have any decision making powers over Council resources. MG advised that this could potentially be the way forward, however there are still governance issues to be addressed. There was a discussion around devolving funding into cluster areas.</p> <p>BM thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and thanked them for their views and thoughts. He felt very optimistic about moving this project forward with officers and members following the meeting.</p> <p>MG thanked the group for their input and asked if they would be able to come together again as a group to move this forward further. The group agreed.</p> <p>TC thanked MG and talked more around the cross-cutting issues which will run through each cluster area. He asked that the group look at the slides again and if they have any comments/thoughts could they please send them through to achamberlain@swindon.gov.uk</p> <p>AOB: TC received a letter of resignation from Ruth Hursey, the OMG Geographical Communities Representative. He thanked Ruth for her hard work over the past years and looked forward to her continued and valuable support in the future.</p> <p>TC also advised that Steve Richards who is currently our representative from the South West Regional Development Agency will no longer be able to be part of the group because of the re-structuring exercise that has taken place recently within his team. TC thanked Steve for his hard work on the group and wished him luck for the future.</p>	
3	<p><u>Date and time of next meeting :</u> Thursday 12th Feb 12-2 – Committee Room 1 – an invitation for this meeting will be sent out w/c 19.1.09</p>	JB