



Coventry Partnership Business Group Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2008 at the Chamber of Commerce

Present:

Les Ratcliffe, Jaguar Cars (Chair)
John Guildford, Business in the Community
Roger Lewis, Peugeot Citroen
Ric Richards, Federation of Small Businesses
Faye Williams, Common Purpose
Karen O'Donaghue, Coventry First
Nigel Wain, Coventry Partnership
Dianne Williams, Chamber of Commerce
Jonathan Jardine, Coventry Partnership
Lesley Sigston, Alcohol Harm reduction coordinator, Coventry City Council
Nicola Castledine, Environmental Health, Coventry City Council

Apologies:

Dhiran Vagdia, FORCE
Louise Teboul, Common Purpose
Andy Walmsley, Coventry City Council
Linsey Hunter, Federation of Small Businesses
Pete Walters, CV One
Louise Bennett, Chamber of Commerce
Shirley Kent, CV One
Sherod Williams Institute of Directors
Jayne Magee, Business in the Community
Jo Sandford, Consultant

Meeting Highlights

The progress on the Reading Mentors 'Ask' from Business was reported to the group. Presentations were given on Alcohol Harm Reduction and Smoking and how this impacts business with ill health and absenteeism.

The group agreed that healthier lifestyles should be promoted as a general issue rather than addressing smoking and alcohol separately. The Council agreed to investigate available information on promoting healthier lifestyles for circulation to the group.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Les Ratcliffe welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting of the Business Group. Attendees introduced themselves. John Guildford was attending in place of Jayne

Magee who was now on maternity leave. Jonathan Jardine introduced himself as the Interim Partnership Development Manager acting until the newly appointed manager takes up the post. Apologies as above were recorded.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed.

Sustainable Community Strategy Update

Nigel reported that the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA was being launched to the Citizens of Coventry at the end of June. A Partnership Communications Officer had recently been recruited (Tim Coleman) working 2 days a week. As soon as possible he would contact the Chamber to work on the summary SCS for the business community.

Reading Partners

Progress on the Reading Partners Initiative presented to the April meeting was reported:-

- Ric Richards had included information in the FSB newsletter but he had received feedback that FSB members did not really see the link with businesses.
- Faye invited Rick Leigh to attend a business day at Common Purpose
- John reported that Reading Partners were already working with the Business Forum and BITC were working with him to recruit volunteers..
- Sherod had promoted Reading Partners with over a dozen companies but the people had commented that they could not spare the time away from the workplace and some of the companies were already involved with similar activities such as Young Enterprise. A common problem reported was poor communications with Schools which discouraged involvement.
- Dhiran had sent out the info but thought that the main interest of the construction industry would be around making the construction industry more attractive to young people.

Les commented that the Partnership Theme groups had been asked to identify possible links with Business and inevitably some Business's would be more aligned to some themes than others.

Les also reported that Stella Manzie was moving to another job in Scotland and would be leaving the Council and Partnership at the end of June and that Ken Taylor had taken over from Les as the Chair of the Partnership.

3. Healthier Employees

Les introduced Lesley Sigston and Nicola Castledine who had been invited to talk about Healthier Employees, particularly around alcohol and smoking issues and how this could be promoted to Business's through the Business Group.

Copies of the presentation are attached.

Lesley presented the concerns in Coventry around alcohol:-

- The Council had developed an alcohol harm reduction strategy
- Alcohol and Violent crime is high in Coventry,
- The Alcohol strategy will shortly be published,
- The strategy is not about preventing people from drinking but promoting sensible consumption,
- People can still hold down jobs even with high levels of consumption,
- There has in the past been money available for drugs prevention but not for alcohol
- Absence from work for health costs between £600 and £732 per employee.
- Alcohol is a cross cutting theme in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- There are 4 Themes in the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy:-
 - Treatment and Care
 - Crime and Community Safety
 - Young People
 - Licensing and the Alcohol Industry
- Improving employees health would reduce levels of absence
- Effective absence management is needed
- The Alcohol industry is important to the local economy.
- There are more problems when licensed premises are located near housing such as in Earlsdon.
- 39% of people in Coventry drink to Hazardous, Harmful or Binge levels.
- Treatment of health issues is available through Community Alcohol Services and through GPs.

Nicola presented the key concerns around smoking:-

- Smoke free Coventry was founded in 2001- an alliance committed to providing a smoke free environment, reducing accessibility of cigarettes to under age and helping smokers to quit.
- Recent activity with businesses saw 4000 visits to explain the impact of the non smoking legislation introduced 12 months ago.
- In Coventry most employers are complying with the legislation but there is still an issue with incorrect signage.
- Smoking causes 106,000 premature deaths in UK- 1 in 5 of all deaths.
- Smokers loose on average 16 years of life

- 1 in 3 beds at Walsgrave is taken up with a smoking related condition.
- 3M work days are lost in the West Mids annually.
- Absenteeism costs £196M work time and £668 per employee in lost productivity.
- There are smoking cessation clinics to suit all peoples needs, day time and evening
- Quit and Trim classes launched, Email and text service for under 25s and outreach in schools
- Business can help by:-
 - Motivating employees to quit
 - Promote smoking cessation classes
 - Review smoking policies
- Help is available through Coventry City Council
– Joanna Luxmore 02476 833993 Joanna.luxmore@coventry.gov.uk
- A range of leaflets were handed out at the meeting promoting the services available

In the discussion that followed the following points were made:-

- Companies can introduce their own smoking policies which ban smoking during work time as at the Council and Hospital. This goes further than the law.
- There are issues around enforcing such policies.
- Ric commented on the future proposals to ban power wall advertising which could cost the FSB members money. Jonathan pointed out that the consultation on this was ongoing, details were on the http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_085120
- Roger commented that the most effective thing employers could do was support employees who want to quit smoking. Peugeot had run campaigns with the Council to promote healthier lifestyles to employees.
- Dianne thought smaller companies would not be able to afford the time, Nicola pointed out there were evening clinics and high profile campaigns were run in places such as the city centre
- The meeting thought that there should be a general message about Health and how to promote it rather than separate smoking and alcohol leaflets.
- This should include case studies and some business facts on absenteeism. Case studies may need to be different for smaller and larger businesses.

Action

Nicola undertook to investigate what is already available for the promotion of Healthy Lifestyle and circulate that to the group.

4. Forthcoming Issues

Dianne suggested the group should focus the next meeting on preparing a message for the Partnership on the issues currently faced by Businesses and how tough it was getting. This was agreed for the Sept meeting
Les proposed that we work out the agenda for the next 4 or 5 meetings.
Roger wanted the meeting to focus on the issues being covered at the future partnership meeting so that he could have a mandate to represent business views.

5. AOB

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wed 3rd Sept 10 till 12.
Roger confirmed he would chair the meeting as Les would be on holiday and offered to host it at the new Peugeot site.

.Nigel Wain