

Parklife Business Parks Project

Report to Cheltenham Borough Council (Phase 1, 2006-2007)

Original Funding Proposal

Funding requested through this proposal will support:

- a new Business Centre based within an employer's premises on the Kingsditch site;
- establishment of a strong network group and through this determine the feasibility of a Business Improvement District;
- a Business-to-Business event

Business Centre

After consultation two employers on Kingsditch have offered the use of their facilities as a business centre.

- C.F Roberts, an electrical insulation company on Kingsditch lane. This office has been refurbished and will host up to 15 people. The room was used to host a Network meeting in March.
- Vibixa has been a major figure head for the site for the last 30 years. The room is larger than C.F Roberts and offers an up to date white interactive white board system, provided through CBC funding. Final refurbishments are now taking place and the centre will be formally launched within the next 2 months.
- All the businesses on the site have been contacted by e-mail, telephone or mail. A first Network meeting was held in October; 8 businesses were engaged, with a further 4 businesses expressing an interest to be involved in the project. Issues resulting from Network meeting have been investigated and are ongoing.
- A Kingsditch Newsletter has been sent to all the businesses on the site. The main issues of concern identified by businesses are litter, "boy racers" and signage and these issues are being actively pursued by the business advocate.

Business to Business event

A Manufacturing Meet the Buyer event took place on 6 March 2008 at the Golden Valley Hotel in Cheltenham. An interim three month report is attached

and a full 6 month debrief report will be issued in September. The main points from the report are:

- 23 buyers from 18 buying companies were represented at this event
- 54 delegates from 37 supplying companies attended - aall of which were from Gloucestershire.
- All of the buyers and suppliers would attend a “Manufacturing Meet the Buyers” event again.
- The pre-event briefing worked well with most of the suppliers who had booked attending.
- 74% of suppliers and 72% of buyers thought 60% or more of the businesses they met were matched to their requirements.
- 82% of buyers stated they would definitely or probably be doing business with suppliers met at the event.
- 73% of suppliers stated their chance of doing business was ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’.
- 83% of buyers stated the range of suppliers was ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’ and 92% of the suppliers stated the range of buyers was ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’.
- Suppliers met an average of 9 buyers and obtained a further 1.4 leads from the networking board on the day.
- All of the buyers and suppliers stated the Overall Organisation was ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’.
- All suppliers stated that the pre-event briefing presentations and motivational sales speech were ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’.

Network Group

The establishment of the network group was delayed by the long term sickness of the business advocate with responsibility for the site. A temporary replacement was recruited for three months from September to ensure that the work progressed, and through his work the business centre discussions were started and the first network meeting took place.

The permanent advocate has now returned to work and is carrying on with the work and seeking to grow the network and establish a management group to prioritise site issues and draw up an action plan.

Targets – Cheltenham (Kingsditch + Lansdown)

	2 year target	Achieved
Business centre opened	1	2
Businesses supported	100	34

to positive outcomes (25% new)		
Business Park network meetings	12	6
Business park events	20	7
Recruitment fairs	2	0*
No of learners	300	87
People assisted to get employment	100	0*
Business Improvement district ballot held	TBC	
Amount of private sector finance/capital investment attracted as a result of SWRDA investment	£100K	£28,100**

* = A recruitment fair was planned for Kingsditch and a detailed planning and feasibility study took place with JobCentre Plus. From JC+ data and information gathered by Parklife staff it was determined that there were very few jobs on the estate at that time and it was agreed that the event should be postponed until the situation improved.

** = the private sector investment is made up of a number of components including fees paid for training activities, capital investment in refurbishing the business centres and "in kind" value of rental of the business centre premises.

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