

Group Discussions

The purpose of this workshop group discussion is to

1. reflect on the plenary discussion from the morning session
2. identify key issues for the continuing enquiry based on the questions posed for your discussion group

The output from these discussion groups will be used to inform questions put to the SW RDA at the Business Development Select Committee hearing on 1 December 2003.

The lines of inquiry/questions are suggested to stimulate discussion but these are not intended to be exhaustive. It is not anticipated that each of these questions will be comprehensively answered in the workshop.

Workshop Discussion

Group 1: Vision and Strategy

The purpose of this workshop discussion is to consider the vision the South West has for the future of business support in the region. The content of this discussion will be used to inform the questions put to the SW RDA at the Business Development Select Committee on 1 December 2003.

The *Key Messages* from the DTZ Pidea Integrated Business Support Review notes that:

There is a lack of a common shared strategy, leadership and joined-up delivery across the whole of the business support process in the South West. Addressing this would make the whole process more effective and efficient.

It is suggested that the group focuses its discussion around this finding. The group may also wish to cover some or all of the following issues:

- Is there a strategic vision for business support process / business development in the South West? If so, who "owns" that vision?
- Is that vision 'right'? If not, what should the substance of that vision be about?
- How can the vision for Business Development support more sustainable business practices?
- Does the SW RDA articulate a clear vision of how it is trying to support business in the South West— does it have a defined set of goals for SW businesses?
- Do the various regional strategies, e.g. for Incubation, Finance and Innovation support a coherent vision ?
- What is the role for SW RDA in providing leadership and a shared strategy for business support ?

Note - The lines of inquiry/questions are suggested to stimulate discussion but these are not intended to be exhaustive. It is not anticipated that each of these questions will be comprehensively answered in the workshop.

Workshop Discussion

Group 2: Priorities for Business Development

The purpose of this workshop discussion is to consider the key priorities for Business Development in the South West and the role of the South West RDA in identifying and supporting these priorities. The content of this discussion will be used to inform the questions put to the SW RDA at the Business Development Select Committee on 1 December 2003.

The *Key Messages* from the DTZ Pinda Integrated Business Support Review notes that:

There are limited resources to provide business support services, so there is a need to prioritise who receives this. The focus must be on the businesses that are open to receiving support to help them grow to ensure that the impact of public sector intervention is maximised in the regional economy.

It is suggested that the group focuses its discussion around this finding. The group may also wish to cover some or all of the following issues:

- How should recipients of business support services be prioritised ?
- How will prioritisation support the objectives for the region set out in the Regional Economic Strategy?
- Are there particular missed opportunities in the South West for providing business support?
- How can the SW RDA effectively support business in the region and what should its priorities for action be?
- Is there evidence that the SW RDA recognises the different types of intervention required for different businesses and areas of the South West? Does it have a sufficiently clear rationale for intervention?
- What should the balance be between meeting the need for growth of indigenous businesses as opposed to seeking Inward Investment?
- Do Black or Minority Ethnic businesses in the South West receive sufficient support?

Note - The lines of inquiry/questions are suggested to stimulate discussion but these are not intended to be exhaustive. It is not anticipated that each of these questions will be comprehensively answered in the workshop.

Workshop Discussion

Group 3: Joined-up delivery

The purpose of this workshop discussion is to consider the delivery of business support services in the South West and the role of the South West RDA in supporting these services. The content of this discussion will be used to inform the questions put to the SW RDA at the Business Development Select Committee on 1 December 2003.

The *Key Messages* from the DTZ Pieda Integrated Business Support Review notes that:

There is a need to reduce the range of services provided and ensure that duplication is not artificially supported by public funding as this adds to the poor awareness and confusion in the target market. There is also a need to improve the quality of those that remain through a robust and consistent accreditation process. By identifying the services that are most effective, more resources can be focused on these, thus maximising the impact on the regional economy.

It is suggested that the group focuses its discussion around this finding. The group may also wish to cover some or all of the following issues:

- What should SW RDA be doing to promote more coherent and effective business support?
- Is there agreed and clear targeting of business support provision at a regional and local level?
- Should business support provision arrangements vary across the region – if so, how?
- Are the roles and responsibilities for business support arrangements clearly defined and well understood?
- Is there sufficient buy in from regional partners to the economically important sectors identified in the RES to ensure their effective delivery?
- Is there a need to target support at certain kinds of business start ups – for example high growth or high value added businesses?
- Is the SW RDA's role as strategic catalyst well understood – e.g. when working with regional and local organisations, including business and the voluntary sector?

Note - The lines of inquiry/questions are suggested to stimulate discussion but these are not intended to be exhaustive. It is not anticipated that each of these questions will be comprehensively answered in the workshop.

Workshop Discussion

Group 4: Initiatives and actions (1)

The purpose of this workshop discussion is to consider the role of the South West RDA in working with regional partners to create the right conditions for successful businesses in the South West. The content of this discussion will be used to inform the questions put to the SW RDA at the Business Development Select Committee on 1 December 2003.

The *Key Messages* from the DTZ Pleda Integrated Business Support Review notes that:

There are limited resources to provide business support services, so there is a need to prioritise who receives this. The focus must be on the businesses that are open to receiving support to help them grow to ensure that the impact of public sector intervention is maximised in the regional economy.

It is suggested that the group focuses its discussion around these themes:

- What key initiatives should SW RDA undertake to encourage further innovation in business?
- Does the SW RDA effectively support the widespread adoption of sustainable business practices in South West, including the minimisation of energy use and a reduction in the need to travel?
- How can the development of regional and local supply chains be encouraged more in the South West?
- Whether business demand for advice in meeting environmental obligations or introducing new technology (as identified in the DTZ report, for example,) is being met?
- How effectively is SW RDA supporting business growth through access to appropriate finance and advice?
- Are the kinds of businesses targeted by the Regional Venture Capital fund receiving sufficient help to ensure they are ready for investment?
- Does the SW RDA work effectively to ensure that there is a range of workspace to support the needs of developing companies?

Note - The lines of inquiry/questions are suggested to stimulate discussion but these are not intended to be exhaustive. It is not anticipated that each of these questions will be comprehensively answered in the workshop.

Workshop Discussion

Group 5: Initiative and actions (2)

The purpose of this workshop discussion is to consider the role of the South West RDA in working with regional partners to create the right conditions for successful businesses in the South West. The content of this discussion will be used to inform the questions put to the SW RDA at the Business Development Select Committee on 1 December 2003.

The *Key Messages* from the DTZ Pleda Integrated Business Support Review notes that:

There are limited resources to provide business support services, so there is a need to prioritise who receives this. The focus must be on the businesses that are open to receiving support to help them grow to ensure that the impact of public sector intervention is maximised in the regional economy.

It is suggested that the group focuses its discussion around these themes:

- How can more small business and social enterprises be encouraged in disadvantaged areas? Do you think the SW RDA does enough of this?
- Do businesses located in incubation centres receive sufficient advice and support from SW RDA?
- How effectively does the SW RDA work with Sub Regional Partnerships?
- Is the SW RDA working effectively with other regional organisations in tackling issues relevant to business? Are the roles and responsibilities clearly defined and understandable?
- Are the SW RDA's key initiatives in business support perceived to be delivering real benefits for the South West's economy?
- How well are its business support initiatives co-ordinated with the neighbourhood renewal agenda?
- How is the SW RDA increasing the rate of knowledge transfer between further and higher education, public sector research establishments and business?

Note - The lines of inquiry/questions are suggested to stimulate discussion but these are not intended to be exhaustive. It is not anticipated that each of these questions will be comprehensively answered in the workshop.