

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 4 March 2013

Portfolio:	Policy, Strategy and Finance
Subject:	Business Solent Champion Proposal
Report of:	Director of Planning and Environment
Strategy/Policy:	
Corporate Objective:	Maintain and extend prosperity

Purpose:

To advise the Executive of the proposal submitted by Business Solent for the Council to become a Solent Champion.

Executive summary:

Business Solent has recognised Fareham Borough Council as a valued Solent Champion and has offered the Council a discretionary Champion Programme annual package.

Recommendation:

That the Executive accept the offer from Business Solent at an annual subscription of £1,000 for the year commencing 1 March 2013.

Reason:

To enable the Council to participate in the Business Champion Programme for the Solent region, and to benefit from a specific Fareham focussed programme set out in paragraph 4 of the Executive Briefing Paper.

Cost of proposals:

£1,000 per annum membership subscription for existing revenue budgets.

Appendices: None

Background papers: None

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date: 4 March 2013

Subject: Business Solent Champion Proposal

Briefing by: Director of Planning and Environment

Portfolio: Policy, Strategy and Finance

INTRODUCTION

1. Business Solent is a not-for-profit business engagement organisation which unites business leaders to drive economic prosperity, with the aim of making the Solent region a great place to work, invest, study, live and enjoy. Business Solent has recognised Fareham Borough Council as a valued Solent Champion and has offered the Council a discretionary Champion Programme annual package in line with other Local Authorities of a similar size, such as Eastleigh Borough Council. The key priorities of Business Solent are:
 - To connect business leaders to drive economic prosperity;
 - To act as a bridge between business and education;
 - To tell and sell the story of the Solent region, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

PROPOSAL

2. Business Solent states that its mission is to connect the 1,000 most ambitious leaders across the Business Solent region to drive economic prosperity, working in association and alliance with many partners, organisations and other interested parties. The range of participating organisations includes:
 - Local Authorities in the Solent region and also Dorset / M3 areas;
 - Local Enterprise Partnerships, including Solent LEP;
 - Hampshire Chamber of Commerce with representation on several Action Groups;
 - Federation of Small Business (FSB) work with Business Solent to support start up business and supply chain development;
 - Institute of Directors (IoD) is a Solent Champion and we plan joint events and initiatives;

- EEF Manufacturing Organisation (South) is our partner for the Solent Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Forum;
 - Marine South East is our partner in Solent Maritime;
 - Business Solent is part of the Southampton Volunteer Alliance;
 - Solent Champions include Higher and Further Education – many colleges and 4 Universities.
3. There are over 230 leading employers from across all sectors, known as Solent Champions representing the biggest names in the business sector, together with a growing Associate programme for smaller companies. The Solent Champion programme is business-led, market driven and will engage and unite all sectors and industries. Champions, collectively, are highly influential in driving change, shaping policy and informing decisions. Together, Champions have the opportunity to deliver positive change through the work of the Action Groups, Alliances and clusters which they develop and drive themselves.
4. Business Solent's offer to the Council includes a package of Fareham focussed proposals:
- Business Solent will facilitate and deliver a Consultation Event during 2013, in association with the Council and key landowners, aimed at key interested parties, partners and businesses to further explore and debate employment opportunities for the New Community of North Fareham. The Council will be asked to present at this event to share its' vision, progress and plans to date, and the Council's strategic objectives for the New Community North of Fareham;
 - Business Solent will coordinate a business-led forum in association with the Council to provide advocacy, support and promotion for the New Community North of Fareham. This group would also plan a proposed event and communications programme in conjunction with the Council, key landowners and other key parties;
 - Elected member invitation on a complimentary VIP basis to Business Solent Conferences and key events, including at least one private Chatham House themed Chief Executive Officer dinner with business leaders;
 - Business Solent will act as an advocate for the Council and promote Council led initiatives, projects and programmes through their marketing, communications and events as appropriate – this would include an interview feature with an elected member in a quarterly newsletter which is distributed to over 4,000 business leaders and executives;
 - Business Solent will act as an advocate for the proposed CEMAST centre at Daedalus in association with the Solent Enterprise Zone (EZ), Fareham College and the Council;

- Business Solent will promote the Solent Enterprise Zone through our marketing, communications and events as appropriate and also through the Business Solent Action Groups – Solent Maritime (in association with Marine South East) and the Solent Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Forum (in association with EEF Manufacturing Organisation (South)) – Enterprise Zone site business visits will also be facilitated/arranged as and when appropriate;
 - The Champion programme connects business leaders across all sectors to drive economic prosperity – we will facilitate connections and engage business in the strategic objectives of the Council to influence and drive forward positive economic outcomes;
 - The Council will receive approximately 80–100 invitations to events in the Solent region per year at a discounted rate so that Officers and elected members may engage with business as relevant to the Council's objectives.
 - The Council will have a Champion page on the Business Solent website to promote our mission, aims, contacts and events as required;
 - Business Solent will further promote the Council through monthly e-news, subject to receiving latest news and public relations material from the Council.
5. In addition, Business Solent has offered to work with the Council to help deliver specific projects, programmes and initiatives as needed, subject to covering any associated costs, and will also inform the Council about management and leadership training courses which may be of interest internally, together with a broad range of other opportunities as they arise.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. Business Solent has recognised Fareham Borough Council as a valued Solent Champion and has offered the Council a discretionary Champion Programme annual package of £1,000 from 1 March 2013. This contribution is in line with other Local Authorities of a similar size, such as Eastleigh Borough Council, and can be met from existing revenue budgets.

CONCLUSION

7. Business Solent and the Solent Champion programme are key to business engagement in the Solent sub-region uniting business leaders in the drive for economic prosperity. The Fareham focused package of proposals will greatly assist the Council in the coming year.

Reference Papers: None.