



Present - FODDC – Tim Perrin (TP), Peter Hibbert, (PH, Steve Kendall (SK): FSB - Peter King (PK), Laurie Moseley (LM), Anne King (AK)

1. Car Park Charges

- a. FODDC had held briefing sessions with Town Councils
- b. Public opinion was against charging
- c. Does charging make economic & financial sense? Cabinet requires business case to be made. FSB concerned that all costs to FODDC of car park charges – including administrative costs, potential loss of revenue from impact on local businesses, etc. should all be part of cost-benefit analysis.
- d. Street parking enforcement likely to increase use of car parks
- e. FSB concerned car park charges would constrain time spent in town centres – affecting social cohesion as well as local businesses.
- f. Supermarkets too would charge for parking, so that people would not go into town after shopping in supermarket.
- g. FODDC said final decision would be made by Councillors.
- h. FSB considered FODDC needed to look at demographic using town centre car parks.
- i. FODDC agreed to keep FSB (via Secretary AK), informed of progress

AP 1 FODDC to keep FSB informed re car park charges

2. Waste

- a. FSB asked about actions taken by FODDC to benefit from significant increases in value of waste, especially metals.
- b. FODDC only collects domestic waste; and Biffa gives recycling credits per tonne to FODDC . No figures were available regarding income to FODDC via this.
- c. FSB recommended FODDC look at London Metal Exchange (LME) Bulletins to find current prices of scrap metal, and consider whether benefits from price increases could be obtained.

AP 2 FODDC to look at waste metal prices and evaluate possible benefits from increases

- d. A Business Waste scheme was being handled by Gloucestershire 1st (Shaz Siddiqui). FODDC not aware of state of play, as it is not part of their remit.
- e. FODDC reported current consultation on business waste by FOD Partnership (contact: Bella Edgington). FODDC agreed to keep FSB in the loop.

AP 3 FODDC to keep FSB informed of business waste consultation with FOD Partnership

- f. FODDC drew FSB attention to an Environment Group meeting on 15th August re: Dean Fearn pilot project, which may overlap with Gloucestershire 1st work

AP 4 FODDC to keep FSB informed re progress of pilot study

3. Role of Chambers of Commerce & FSB

- a. PH asked about role of Chambers of Trade/Commerce and FSB in FOD
 - i. AK explained role of Chambers of Commerce generally.
 - ii. Chambers of Trade existed in Market Towns in FOD, generally focussing on very local issues
 - iii. FSB – much bigger organization, lobbying at all levels from Parish to EU, plus offering members a wide range of benefits.



- b. FSB FOD was looking for dialogue and strategic alliances with organizations working to improve the potential of small businesses in the area.

4. Infrastructure, Energy, etc.

- a. FSB looking to FODDC to be energetic and vociferous in lobbying at county and RDA level about:

- i. Access to and across FOD by road – condition of roads, congestion, public transport, etc.

- 5. Electricity supply – area suffering from brown outs which damage machinery and computer equipment.

- i. Broadband – inadequate bandwidth, slow speeds, spiking on the line, etc. were all causing real problems to FOD businesses. More micro businesses are using computers to access the global markets which will keep them in business. Good broadband connection is essential. Many businesses are unable to upload and download data and have to revert to sending material by post.

- ii. Digital also a problem – many areas cannot receive digital signals

- iii. FODDC agreed to speak to FOD Partnership, FBF, FE Colleges and others to lobby as one voice for solutions to the broadband & digital problems? SK reported that RDA had supported programme in Somerset for WiFi and repeater (line of sight) masts. FSB asked if FODDC could pursue support for FOD – to improve broadband and enable access by everyone in FOD to digital TV and radio. Changes in technology ought to make solutions available at an affordable price.

AP 5 FODDC – Economic Development – to take forward joint lobbying, etc.

- b. SK reported that SWRDA needed to understand importance of infrastructure, supplies, planning, etc. in economic sustainability of FOD. FODDC to look at how to make the best use of portfolio holders as lobbyists for FOD.
- c. FSB concerned that SWRDA has failed to engage successfully with small businesses.
- d. FSB reported that problems with broadband, coupled with problems with power supply, road infrastructure and rural nature of area made FOD an increasingly difficult place to do business.
- e. FODDC reported Brian Robinson held Cabinet Portfolio on these issues, was aware of broadband issues and was on SWRDA, so in a good position to lobby.

AP 6 FODDC to put need for lobbying on broadband to Brian Robinson

- f. LM asked whether FODDC could use SPARSE to get broader base for lobbying for better broadband and digital provision in rural areas. TP replied that FODDC use SPARSE for benchmarking performance.
- g. AK reported that the demise of the energy watchdog would make it much more difficult for small businesses to complain about problems with supply.

AP 7 AK to forward email on energy watchdog to SK

6. Education/Business Links

- a. SK reported an RDPE Bid in preparation for development of employer engagement with schools. RDPE replacing Leader+ organizations and looking to do more, but RDA is insisting on harder economic edge to bids. SK seeking to run Young Enterprise Primary Programme in FOD, and needs business support.
- b. FSB has national guidance for members on engaging with schools; and the potential to email members in specific areas with information about programmes where they might become involved.

AP 8 A & PK to liaise with SK on YE Programme/Employer Engagement with Schools



7. Planning Issues

- a. FSB reported that planning issues were a major source of problems for small businesses.
- b. FSB was concerned that small businesses needed to be treated equitably and to be seen to be treated so; especially that large organizations should not be treated differently.
- c. FODDC agreed that the public perception of planning was poor and would take time to improve.
- d. FSB gave a list of major concerns related to the application by Tesco to site a supermarket in Cinderford. Of particular concern were:
 - i. the justification of retail need (given that a significant percentage of Tesco's proposed turnover would come from existing businesses)
 - ii. the environmental impact
 - iii. the impact on small businesses in Cinderford
 - iv. traffic – especially 40 tonne lorries travelling from Littledean or Nailbridge – as most of Cinderford town centre is effectively one-way.
 - v. the enforcement of any agreements made by Tesco on planning gain.
 - vi. the quality of information provided by Tesco: especially in relation to its potential markets, the amount of additional traffic - including lorry movements which would be generated, and the quality of jobs created.
- e. SK reported that Tesco had resubmitted its application, but that this would not be registered until negotiations relating to planning gain were complete.
- f. PH considered that there were huge opportunities for mixed development in Cinderford as part of its regeneration. He reported Cinderford Town Council were very annoyed at the delays in accessing the funding for redevelopment.
- g. FODDC was concerned that SWRDA's main focus was on urban areas.
- h. FODDC is looking to develop each of the 4 market towns with a unique local focus
- i. Planning and development are constrained by regulations related to spatial policy and land use; and the need to convince Members.
- j. FSB expressed concern that regeneration money was spent on developments which were unsustainable and often detracted from an area in the long term because of lack of maintenance.
- k. SK advised that RDPE funding was based on sustainability and leaving a legacy. FODDC fully seized of need for local people to "own" developments.
- l. FODDC seeking to work with Forestry Commission where common purpose is established

AP 9 Agreed FODDC & FSB to work together as appropriate to promote FOD

8. Website

- a. FSB concerned that FODDC website not easy to navigate; and names of Councillors were accessible, names of Officers were not.
- b. FODDC agreed website not sufficiently informative, especially in marketing FOD to internal and external tourists.
- c. FODDC needs to balance value for money with resource utilisation re website
- d. FODDC's new web system will allow Group champions to update their own areas of policy, etc.
- e. Should FODDC spend money promoting itself? FSB considered the website should inform the public about its activities and personnel but should promote the FOD not the Council.

9. LAGBI Funding

- a. FSB wanted the money spent to support the local business community and economy
- b. SK reported that the funding was changing – in future the money would have to be spent in specific areas
- c. Allocation of funds would be decided in autumn.



AP 10 FODDC to keep FSB informed

10. Other issues

- a. **Cost of services** in rural areas is twice as much as in urban areas, but policy and funding does not take adequate account of that
- b. **Energy** – Severn & Wye Energy Agency (Martin Brain) – possible pilot scheme for energy use in small businesses. Is FSB interested in pursuing this?

AP 11 FSB – to evaluate interest in possible pilot study

- c. **Perception of FODDC** – general feeling that things were improving; but FODDC would appreciate FSB FOD feedback – particularly positive feedback to Councillors. FODDC keen to develop good relationships with organizations within the local community and to be seen as a positive force. FODDC particularly keen to prevent personal attacks against individual officers or Councillors.
- d. **Pilot Study on Energy** - FODDC considering setting up pilot through RDPE funding to look at development of clusters of small businesses specialising in research, development, engineering, manufacture and maintenance of technologies to provide sustainable, environmentally friendly energy generation. It is envisaged that this would develop alongside educational and training support to develop and sustain appropriate skills.

11. Future meetings

It was agreed that meetings should be held regularly between FSB and FODDC. Other meetings between FSB and individual officers within the Council would take place on an ad hoc, at need basis.

AP 12 FODDC & FSB to set dates for further meeting