

## Swindon Borough Council Entry for PPMA Cross Sector working/Effective Partnership Initiative

Swindon Borough Council made the decision in 2016 to invest in what became termed as leadership across the boundaries. This was a specific and deliberate effort to recognise that we cannot work in isolation to address the challenges and issues facing local government but that we need to develop and draw on the best and brightest talent we can to deliver a modern, effective, efficient and well led Council of the Future.

To achieve this we started by working with our Local Enterprise Network, (LEP) broker Higher Futures to undertake a market selection process to find the right academic partner. With our successful partner, University of West England, we began putting the flesh on the bones of what was to become the most exciting and different approach to public sector leadership development our Council had embarked in many years. The corporate sponsor for the Future Leader and Aspiring Leader programmes is our Chief Executive, Susie Kemp and recently SBC Members in our Overview and Scrutiny Committee commended the approach and renewed a commitment to continue the investment in our existing and future leadership.

However the partnership did not stop with UWE, we sought out for our FLs an exceptional pool Executive Coaches and Coaching Psychologists from a wide range of backgrounds and matched them to the FLs. We also trained a pool of qualified internal coaches who support our ALs. All candidates are matched with different styles of Coach and Mentor to make sure they got the widest possible developmental conversations and professional challenge to support their learning.

Our partnership with our esteemed mentors, that you can see on our attachment, are drawn from entrepreneurs, CEOs of Marketing Agencies, Senior Military Personnel, CEOs of Charities and other business and sector leaders. These mentors give their time and expertise free of charge adding amazing return on investment for SBC. This year's cohort of FLs also have an internal FL mentor, who is one of last year's graduates.

To move on to our Aspiring Leader programme, the partnership element here is that we always select at least one local external business partner. In AL programme our extended Management Team handover a genuine business issue which requires focussed piece of work. Our learning and development team then research who locally or regionally has lead in good practice in the area relevant to the challenge. So far our cohorts have been hosted at [Nationwide](#) to look at Digital Inclusion, [M-Shed](#) to learn about the commercialisation of public assets and [W H Smith](#) to look at complex and diverse interventions to promote staff mental health and wellbeing. Again all our external partners have provided their insights, venues and shared practice free of charge to our programme. After conducting their project over six weeks the ALs present their recommendations back to a senior panel for implementation.

In 2016 both these programmes were developed in direct response to external and peer reviews which identified that the improvement of the leadership skill set was critical to our transformation journey to become a modern, effective and efficient Council. We knew that the traditional 'off the self' models had not delivered and we required a fresh approach. In order to define our criteria we analysed all our external feedback, our performance across

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services and staff survey data to distil what were the six key skills, abilities and approaches that we needed to equip future leaders with. These are in the graphic to the right:

1. YOU – the leader:  
Resilience, courage  
and integrity

2. Motivating your  
team to higher  
performance

3. Leadership across  
boundaries:  
working in  
partnership

4. Brand YOU:  
impact and  
influencing for  
results

5. Making change  
happen-and stick

6. Having  
courageous  
conversations

Our analysis also highlighted that for more junior and aspiring leaders, we required a specific focus on skills sets 1, 3 and 6. This alignment of the two programmes, Future Leaders (FL) and Aspiring Leaders (AL), enabled us to develop a clear narrative throughout our leadership and management interventions and begin to create a new leadership language across SBC.

Both programmes are have a competitive application process, with Future leaders also having to undertake a five minute elevator pitch to our Corporate Management Team to secure a place. Here is what our Academic Partner UWE has to say:

### The Future Leaders programme



- **Psychometric profile – Insights**
- **Executive Coach** – external expert coach
- **Executive mentor** – Senior Leaders
- **6 knowledge sessions** over 9 months
- Use of **blended learning and practical online learning exercises** to enhance face to face learning
- **Dedicated Programme Director** and delivery by dynamic, **academic experts and practitioners** from industry
- **Assignments set by Corporate Management Team** – a genuine SBC business challenge
- Access to **additional learning, engagement and networking opportunities**
- A UWE Bristol and ILM recognised **Development Award**
- A **closing celebratory event** to showcase participants' learning, to spread and sustain impact on Swindon's leadership community.

*“The approach in creating the leadership programme has recognised that participants are busy and experienced professionals. Consequently, the programmes combine academic rigour with a strong emphasis on practical application and keeping the programme’s ‘purpose’ - to ready a cohort of suitably experienced, able and motivated individuals to meet the challenges of leadership/management across their organisation and the wider sector. This has been underpinned with business leaders*

*supporting individuals through mentoring and coaching to support their new found confidence in themselves as leaders and to assist them in having a positive impact on their organisation’s performance.”* Lynda Williams, Associate Director (BBEC). Faculty of Business and Law, Bristol Business School, UWE. Bristol. In our accompanying one page document you can see how this supports the journey from management to leadership and in 2019 we have just launched a brand new executive leadership development programme. We have scheduled a full external evaluation of all programmes for autumn this year. But here are some of the impacts of the first year according to our external evaluation report:

“The future leaders recognised that the programme impacted their behaviour as leaders in many positive ways:

- *Shifting in the management style, encouraging more practice from what they’ve learned;*
- *Visible changing in the leadership style with more coaching and mentoring approach, observing team members and helping them to articulate themselves better; aiming to better understand their team’s reactions; Although it can be seen as a change in their behaviour, it*

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*can also be seen as learning results, which demonstrated that the leaders are applying the skills acquired from their own experiences with their coaches and mentors. This is confirmed by the [Future Leader's] team members in the online survey, where 33.3% strongly agree 44.4% agree that there has been more support and motivation from the future leaders."*

This external evaluation by Bath Spa University, as well as surveying the teams the FLs manage they surveyed the line managers of the future leaders to see if they identified any successes, here are some direct quotes from the evaluation report of those surveyed:

*"[They] Better understand the principles of the Swindon Programme than some other staff and are more open to and challenge changes that need to be made. A pool of leaders to draw into work programmes, for example, commissioning procurement."*

*"I have noticed that the FL are working very collaboratively."*

*"Candidate has demonstrated greater awareness of his role in helping to lead, motivate and inspire a team and set the example."*

A real added value from these programme is that we now have a pool of 32 Future Leaders and 48 Aspiring Leaders who we have been able to profile in terms of their skills sets, insights preferences and areas of interest, so that as the demand for the business to resolve the new and complex challenges facing local government, we can create diverse and targeted project groups to support all SBC leaders in how they can find solutions to the issues that arise.



We believe we have created a true multi sector partnership approach with businesses and business leaders to deliver innovative and inspiring leadership programmes which has created a real buzz and sense of drive amongst the existing and future potential candidates. This was best seen at the graduation event held for the first cohorts in December this year, hosted by our Mayor, the Leader of the Council and our Chief Executive.



For the judges information we have attached six slides on A4 which outline the key facets of the programmes and enhanced learning provision. We would like to thank you for considering our application.