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Jeremy Evans, 25 November 2012

Business Plan Framework Draft 1

Audience	Fochabers organisations and people
	Moray Council
	Community Asset Transfer process
	Funding agencies e.g. Moray Leader, National Lottery
	Banks
Time Period	3-year plan
Business Plan focus	The Fochabers Institute
Links	Fochabers Development Trust, funding agencies
Research and Evidence	Detailed and specific, see points 2 - 6
Strategic Relationships	Events organisers, village halls, all to be categorised in detail

1   Objectives of this framework

 ➢ To manage and organise information
 ➢ To guide collection of relevant and reliable information
 ➢ To provide the detailed evidence base for the Fochabers Institute Business Plan
 ➢ To inform strategic planning and marketing
 ➢ To assist financial projections and planning

We need to be focused and keep an open mind at the same time. Base everything on measurable evidence that can be monitored. We may end up with an institute that looks a bit different and that does different things. The starting point is that everything is open to question. We are developing a business plan to improve on the status quo, from space & capacity to pricing and pricing policies, marketing, the customer base and management.

The plan needs to talk to multiple audiences simultaneously. It should capture and cost present and envisaged activities in a fashion that income, grant funds and other monies are clearly and transparently applied.

2   Description of the Fochabers Institute

What exactly have we got? A 110 year old building that recently had a price tag of £800+k slapped on it for repairs and rehabilitation, precipitating discussions about demolishment, community asset transfers and ultimately focusing the village's attention on asking what it really wants from this building. We need to interrogate what we have, so that we can begin to ask ourselves about what we *could* have.

By 'the building', we mean the entire site including parking areas and external facilities. We need to describe the asset in some detail:

The building	➢ Architect's plans or more recent maps of the building
	   o Number and detailed description of rooms / facilities
	   o Condition of rooms / facilities, what repairs to pull into decent order, at what estimated costs?
	   o Photographs of all rooms / facilities
	➢ Flooring areas
	➢ Seating capacities
	➢ Utility installations
	➢ Parking capacities
	➢ Ownership and limitations / restrictions

Use of the Institute	➢ Detail the range of activities that took place during 2012 ➢ Itemise the activities per calendar month ➢ Link activities to rooms / facilities, by morning / afternoon / evening ➢ Identify unused space / facilities in terms of time per month per room ➢ Can we cost unused space and facilities?
Inventory	➢ Provide a detailed inventory of all moveable items owned outright ➢ Provide an inventory of all items leased and/or under maintenance contracts ➢ Estimate the replacement value for all items

What we are looking for is 'foot-fall', and we want to identify where those feet fall. When are the 'dead' times? Are there seasonal patterns? Are some facilities never or hardly ever used?

3   Use and Users of the Institute

We need to who uses the Institute, why they use it and how often, how much each customer paid in 2012. We want to indulge in some speculation about new customers and new uses of the Institute.

Customers	➢ Compile a list of customers: names and addresses ➢ For each customer: reason for use, numbers of people, frequency, £ paid in 2012 ➢ Ask each customer if they intend to continue using the Institute in 2013 and beyond, and if so could they forecast when and/or how often?
Ex-customers	➢ Who are they? ➢ Do we know why they stopped using the Institute? 　　○ Their activities ceased, pricing, convenience, went somewhere else/better etc ➢ Do we still have good relationships with them?
Potential customers for existing uses	➢ Are there particular activities or uses that we wish to promote and/or encourage? ➢ Can we identify, list and link potential customers to these activities / uses?
Possible new uses of the Institute	➢ What might these be? ➢ Would these require improvements, modifications, new equipment, more and/or different staffing or skills? ➢ Would existing customers apply these uses? ➢ Can we identify, list and link potential customers to these new activities / uses?
Revised inventory	➢ Adding to the existing inventory compiled in Item 2, what are the wish-list items that would enable the possible new uses to happen? ➢ Price these within upper / lower bands of £200 or £1000, e.g. £500-700, £3000-4000.

4   Financials

We need to understand sources of income and where money gets spent, both on an annual basis as well as by month so that we can map seasonal changes. This in turn can be mapped against live and dead periods of footfall. We can then begin to see how and when live periods sustain the Institute through 'dead' times. We also need to understand dependency on income from the Moray Council and other sources of regular and occasional grants. This is essential for our risk analysis.

Gordon – are you able to flesh this out in terms of the specific information that you require and the questions you want answered?

We want to model the value of volunteers' time in financial terms. This would be important in any event when applying for grants that require in-kind contributions and match-funding. Management, committee and special or extraordinary meetings get included as well as any unpaid work.

5   Publicity, Promotion and Marketing

The PPM strategy of the Institute will cover quite a wide variety of things. We can advertise space (pricing per room per time of day etc). We can advertise one-offs or series of events (e.g. lectures). We can sell private meeting space. We can market the Institute as ideal for particular activities, e.g. physical exercise meetings, music rehearsals, balls, art exhibitions and so forth. The evolution of new opportunities means that the PPM strategy must be revisited frequently, and its implementation and monitoring must be robust. The PPM strategy not only communicates the Institute's facilities and pricing, but also seeks to influence peoples' perceptions of value – potentially guiding prices upwards.

The PPM strategy needs to be tied to the Institute's pricing policies and strategies.

Iain – What else would you like to add?

Advertising media	- Print media – what are the established titles that we should consider? What are the costs for each (obtain cost sheets) - Social media – Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and others? Bear in mind that neglected or empty social media vectors send out negative PPM messages - Own print – do we consider leaflets, notices, calendars on notice boards etc? What are the costs per medium?
Direct marketing	If we wish to market or emphasise activities, especially new ones, we need to knock on doors and tell people. Compile a directory of all our contacts that may be useful
Website	- Explore web-hosting and management facilities. Start with Wix. Look for providers offering streamlined and easy to use CSS and HTML5. This will help to keep design costs low. Provide comparative pluses and minuses of each option. - We should try and manage our own website. This will reduce management costs and increase our control over timing and content - Reserve an attractive and memorable domain name, preferably with .org suffix
Electronic diary management	Decide whether diaries should be shared beyond Institute management. A website can carry a calendar. Diaries can be linked to contacts directories. Recommend who should manage these and how.

6   Competition and Collaboration

We accept that the Institute will compete with other bodies for custom. We can influence peoples' choices only to a certain degree. We do, however, control how we view other bodies – competitors or collaborators? We will not always operate on an even playing field. In the event of community asset transfer, we may vie with council-subsidised venues for business. Council-owned venues such as school halls are not priced according to open market principles. We can draw people by offering the best possible service in great facilities. We should strive to be an Institute that others want to emulate. Competitive and flexible (but not stupid) pricing is an important tool in our armoury.

Competition	➢ Who offers what we want to offer? List by use / activity ➢ What are their prices? Are their prices limited or set by policies, or do they tailor prices to custom specification? o Obtain price sheets ➢ Contact details and contact person for each competitor body
Collaboration	➢ Who will be our partners in marketing the facilities and services of the Institute? ➢ Where we have services and facilities that others don't, and vice versa, should we cross-market, or collaborate in other ways? o Individual strategies for each collaborator. Who will inform us of upcoming events and activities to which the Institute can market its wares?

7   Risk Analysis

Once we have most of the information from points 2 – 6, we can start to compile a SWOT analysis. All too often, a SWOT is developed far too early on, and is based on anecdote and guesswork – not good. If we all have the same detailed information, we can develop a SWOT that is meaningful. This is because we'll all be talking the same language at this stage, and we'll all be equally well informed.
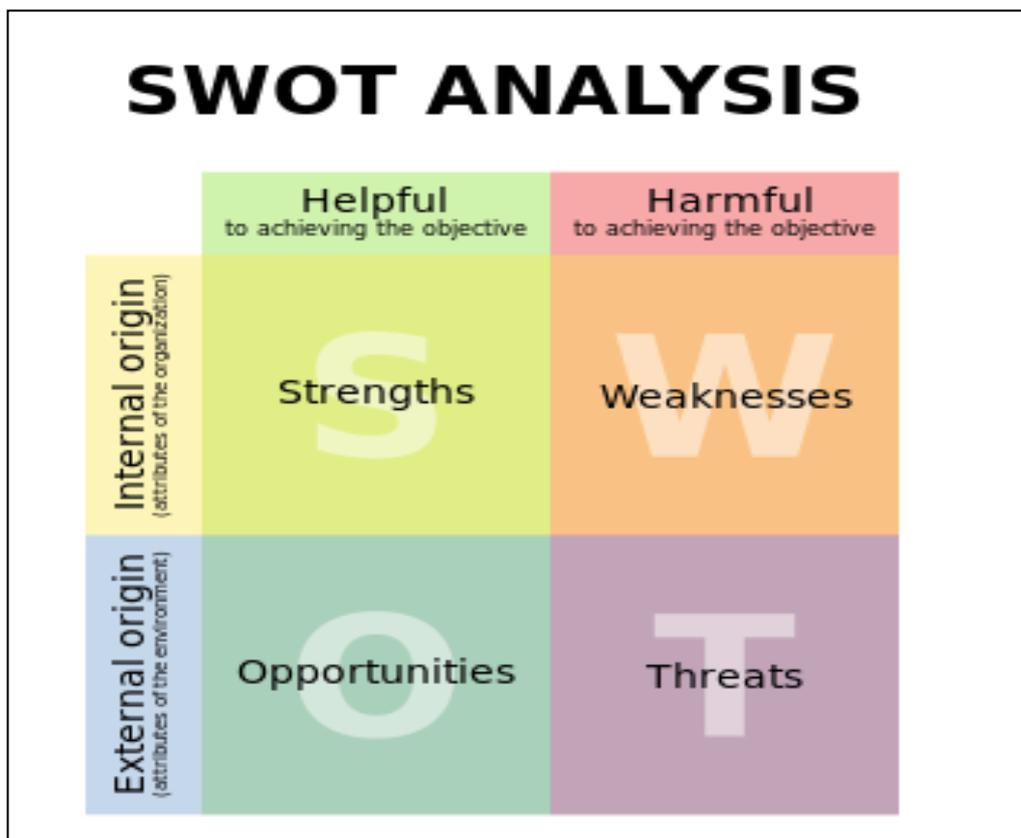
A SWOT analysis is the result of considered deliberation, and is just one of many techniques to inform strategies. Some people find it imprecise, but it has been argued that imprecision reflects a failure of process leading up to a SWOT. If we get our process right, the information feeding into the SWOT should not be anything other than that used in any event to compile a robust business plan. Components cover everything from points 2 – 6.

Details on SWOT analysis can be found at **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWOT_analysis** .

8   Next Steps

The next step is to design the process for developing the business plan.

Immediate: for months 1 - 3

➢ Allocate responsibilities for collecting and collating **and reviewing** information.
➢ Schedule progress meetings for milestones
➢ Some of the information will take time to gather – there are phone calls to be made, letters to be sent, accounts to be consolidated, inventories, brainstorming sessions etcetera. This all needs to be planned

For months 4 - 6

➢ Develop the page of contents for the business plan – both major and minor headings
➢ Set a production date for the business plan. As the evidence base will be compiled by volunteers, and time for writing should not be underestimated, 3 months is realistic for final issue.
➢ Identify influential stakeholders who can review third-from-final drafts of the business plan, within the 3 – 6 month period.
➢ Confirm the distribution list for the plan.

Business Plan development group members:

Gordon Christie: Owner

Jeremy Evans: Lead

Others?