Supporting micro-enterprise and building on Frome's past

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Agenda

- An economic history of Frome in five minutes
- What are micro-enterprises? (Jean)
- Their importance to Frome (Jean)
- Creating the right environment for enterprise (Peter)
- Workshop

Independent, non-conformist, bolshy

'the greatest of the cloth towns in the West' (1650); bigger town than Bath

Strong non-conformism: 'the people here seem more alive than most' *John Wesley*

Cloth a cottage industry; many weavers, dyers and carders working in their own homes; many were literate and independent-minded

Politically dominated by business people – not the aristocracy

1830s, Industrial Revolution – poverty, death, migration, riots

Singer started an Art School 1865

More recent history - Frome has attracted non-conformists, social and economic entrepreneurs

Micro-enterprises – importance for Frome

- Government investment in manufacturing in Somerset centred on aerospace, nuclear, A303

- Replacement for manufacturing industry are jobs in service industry – tend to be zero hours contracts

- So how do we sustain an economic future for Frome?

- Frome already has 1000 businesses, 72% of which employ 9 people or less ('micros')
  - High-tech, quirky shops, artisans, consultants, architects
  - Some examples of start-ups in last few years: 'Postscript', 'Raggedy', Riverhouse Café, 'Mount Art', 'Moo & Too' & 'Phreaky Gamewear' (started by a former College student & Cheese & Grain apprentice)
  - But also trades people, catering, charities and social enterprises

- What does Frome need to give birth to, support and help grow such enterprises?

What makes an area enterprising?

- 'Buzz'
  - Opportunities to network
  - Positive media coverage
  - Lively entertainment & arts
  - Access to business advice/strong business support networks
  - Access to finance
  - Entrepreneurial public servants
- Easy access to low cost co-working spaces
- Superfast broadband

Enterprise Nation Survey – July 2015

Workshop

- Does this list fit for Frome – what is missing, what is less relevant? (5 minutes)

- How is Frome doing against this list? (5 minutes)

- How can we all better support enterprise? (5 minutes)

- Feedback & discussion (15 minutes)