

**County Durham Economic Partnership  
Board  
18 June 2007**

**In attendance;**

Ken Jarrold	CDEP Board Chair
Bob Ward	CDEP Lead Officer Secretariat
Zoë Thirlaway	CDEP Secretariat
Linda Edworthy	Durham County Council Chief Officer
John Pearson	District Council Chief Officer (Derwentside)
Cllr David Llewellyn	District Council Member (Derwentside)
Neil Stokell	District Council Chief Officer (Teesdale)
Chris Davy	Area Tourism Partnership Chair
Melanie Sensicle	Area Tourism Partnership Chief Officer
Sue Parkinson	Business & Enterprise Group Chair
Tom Crompton	Learning & Skills Council
Rob Statham	Durham University Observer
Nick Muse	One NorthEast Observer
Jim Darlington	Government Office North East Observer
Alan Kersh	Further Education Observer
Lee Shostak	Shared Intelligence (Agenda Item 7)
David Eiser	Shared Intelligence (Agenda Item 7)

**1. Apologies;**

Cllr Alan Cox	Durham County Council Member
Cllr Jo Fergus	District Council Member (Teesdale)
Joanna Tait	Further Education Observer
Stacey Hall	One NorthEast Observer
Prof. Phil Jones	Durham University Observer

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

It was highlighted that Item 11 was incorrectly titled and should read County Durham Local Area Agreement.

**3. Matters arising**

**Agenda Item 3** – Encouraging a strategic alliance with NSP – one meeting had already taken place and there were more scheduled. Ken Jarrold reemphasised that the link with Northumberland was very important and asked that other Partners who had links with Northumberland to make the most of them.

**Agenda Item 5** – Wireless County Durham – Alan Hodgson had provided a presentation to the Knowledge Economy Advisory Group. Further meetings with ONE and other Partners were being scheduled to take the concept forward and there was a possibility this could become a regional project.

**Agenda Item 6** – the Leitch Report – Ongoing. A paper would be requested from the LSC for a future Board Meeting once it was clear how Government intended to implement it.

**Action: LSC**

**Agenda Item 8** – County Durham Economic Summit – Work had started and ideas were being shaped but there was more work to be done. A progress report would be requested for the next Board Meeting.

**Action: Secretariat**

**Agenda Item 9** – County Durham Economic Strategy – Item 5 on today's agenda.

**Agenda Item 10** – Single Programme – A report would be presented at the next meeting.

**Action: Secretariat**

**Agenda Item 12** – Private Sector Engagement – A dinner was being organised as agreed but the original date provided was not suitable so it was being re-arranged. Ken Jarrold explained that he was becoming more convinced that links with the private sector were crucial to the Partnership's success. The Business and Enterprise Working Group had also been tasked with looking at private sector engagement and had written to all the economic groups of the LSPs asking how to achieve that. They were awaiting replies.

**Agenda item 15** – Audit Commission Inspection – A number of meetings had taken place and a draft report prepared. The Local Authorities had issued a response on Friday 15 June and there would be a further redraft followed by another meeting

**AOB** – Nomination to the Tyne and Wear City Region Executive Group – Ken Jarrold had been formally nominated as agreed and the Secretariat were awaiting a reply. A meeting was due to take place on 29 June but unfortunately Ken Jarrold would be unable to attend on this occasion.

#### **4. Declarations of interest**

None.

#### **5. Draft County Durham Economic Strategy**

Bob Ward presented the new draft and explained that it was still work in progress and that there was still scope for improvement. The new draft was now presented in a different way. He highlighted that it was focused on the medium and long term as there were not short term fixes. It was worrying that there was nothing obvious that County Durham was not doing already or had already planned to do.

He highlighted that there were four main objectives:

1. Enterprise Culture
2. Competitive Economy
3. Economic Participation
4. Conditions for long term growth

Some of the issues went beyond economic impact and so links would be needed with other Partnerships.

The Action Plan would form the second part of the document. Currently the Strategy felt light on specifics but it needed to be read in conjunction with the Action Plan. It was hoped that both documents could go out for consultation at the same time.

It was felt that the theme of Science, Innovation and Technology did not feature significantly within the document. It was highlighted that the University had been going through a period of transition in its governance structure and as a result they had not been represented at meetings. The theme had certainly not been missed out on purpose and the Partnership acknowledged that the University was a very important asset to County Durham. Ken Jarrold would be meeting with the new Vice Chancellor and it was hoped that this would re-engage the University with the process. It was highlighted that the Partnership should be looking at engaging with all the universities in the region.

It was highlighted that the views of the districts were mixed. It was felt that the consultation should be carried out as soon as possible but that the Partnership should stretch their ambitions. It was agreed that aspirations in this part of the world did need to be increased and that the Partnership needed a vision that would stretch them. It was suggested that a specific question could be asked in the consultation process as to whether the strategy was ambitious enough.

ONE highlighted that during their consultation it became apparent that they needed to balance ambition within context. The RES had been described as ambitious by central Government in aspiring to 90% GVA, so our target may look too ambitious. County Durham's role between the two City Regions and the role of the City Regions overall would be an important consultation issue. People were already beginning to relate to the two City Regions so it was important to have full involvement.

It was felt that the CDES did not make enough reference to the RSS. It was hoped that this Partnership could add to the RSS discussions taking place and demonstrate key areas of opportunity for the County to contribute to the RSS agenda. It was important for County Durham to be able to shape and influence the RSS. It would also be useful to assess the extent to which economic under performance leads to a disproportional disadvantage to the region.

It was suggested that the Strategy should make clear County Durham's vision and priorities. At the moment the document tried to cover everything. The strategy would need to be realistic but ambitious.

Ken Jarrold then went through each section of the strategy.

<b>Executive Summary page I – IV</b>	<b>Agreed</b>
<b>Introduction and Summary page 1 and 2</b>	<b>Agreed</b>
<b>The Economic Challenge page 3 – 7</b>	<b>Agreed subject to;</b>

It was suggested that the Strategy needed to refer to its relationship with the emerging Sustainable Communities Strategy and the wider context of other initiatives.

In relation to “the scale of the challenge” (page 7) it was felt that hook statements were needed to be able to demonstrate the supply side and show where the opportunities were.

**Strategic Rational page 8 – 11**

**Agreed subject to;**

This section mentioned 6 opportunities whereas the Executive Summary mentions 4 opportunities. This was an editing error and all references throughout the document should refer to 6 opportunities.

It was felt that more clarity was needed around what was actually meant by a strong manufacturing base. More detail around rational / justification was needed. Were there any other sectors within the County which had growth potential. There was a need for greater understanding about how these issues and opportunities had been identified. It was highlighted that this level of detail had been included in previous versions but they had been lost in the redrafting. This could be brought back.

Other opportunities presented by the City Regions needed to be established such as the development of more integrated transport networks.

Concern was raised that the corridor concept for North Durham had been downgraded. It was felt that there was confusion over the corridor concept and how it fitted with the RES. It was suggested that a separate meeting be organised by the Secretariat to discuss these issues with the northern District Councils.

**Agreed      Action: Secretariat**

**Strategic Framework page 12 – 13**

**Agreed**

**Interventions page 14**

**Agreed**

**Enterprise Culture & Performance 15 – 17**

**Agreed subject to;**

There was a need to look at the phraseology around the vocational and academic qualifications routes (section 5.1). This section should be about opportunities for all, and should not suggest that vocational qualifications are for students that are “unsuited to an academic curriculum”. Vocational elements are now part of the national curriculum. It was agreed that the LSC would help with the wording.

It was highlighted that the ‘Lead Agencies’ columns would be removed from the document as they were misleading. This level of detail would be within the Action Plan.

It was suggested that the document should go through a rural proofing process to ensure the barriers experienced by rural areas could be taken into account.

**Competitive Businesses page 18 – 23**                      **Agreed subject to;**

Issues regarding confusion over the number of lead agencies - as above.

**Competitive Places page 24 – 26**                      **Agreed subject to;**

'Research' needed to be added to the box relating to Durham City on page 26.

In relation to the statement "Over the next ten years there is an opportunity for housing and market led investment to stabilise villages and towns across the County", the Strategy needed to recognise the opportunity for significant investment from English Partnerships through Housing Market Renewal as there was a danger of losing out if English Partnerships were incorporated into Communities England.

It was emphasised that the Strategy needed to look at and differentiate between those areas which needed stabilisation, revitalisation or transformation and what that meant in practice. Priorities should be identified within a spatial context.

**Competitive Business Sites and Premises pages 27 – 29** **Agreed**  
**Competitive Locations pages 30 – 41**                      **Agreed**  
**Economic Participation pages 42 – 46**                      **Agreed subject to;**

It was requested that the top 10% deprivation cut off point be widened to the top 20% to ensure that some of the boarder line areas do not get overlooked.

**Creating the Conditions for Growth pages 47 – 49** **Agreed subject to;**

The development of a single County Brand was supported but it was stressed that this should not mean the loss of local brands which were already established.

Important documents such as RES and RSS should influence short as well as medium term investment and that should be reflected within the document.

Under workforce development – educational attainment - the wording needed to be redrafted so that there was more emphasis on post 16 attainments. There also needed to be reference to training by colleges and private providers. It was agreed that Bishop Auckland College would help with wording.

**6. CDES Consultation Strategy**

Linda Edworthy highlighted the key points from the Consultation Strategy report. She explained that the LSP's and the private sector needed to be added to the list on consultees. The consultation would last for 12 weeks and they were looking to issue the Action Plan for consultation at the same time. There would be a ½ day conference and a series of meetings. Partners should be involved directly in the exercise for example District Councils could

present the Strategy to their LSPs. A Strategic Environmental Assessment, Rural proofing and equality impact assessments would also have to be carried out.

Clarification was requested as to whether the Partnership were being asked for organisational sign off or just views, as that was two different things. It was explained that there would be two stages. The first stage would be to ask for views the second would be looking for all of the members of the Partnership to sign off the Strategy once the document had been redrafted.

## **7. CDES Action Plan and Single Programme Investment Plan**

Lee Shostak provided an overview of the report that had been circulated prior to the meeting. He highlighted that in the box on the second page 'skills and workforce development' should be at the top of the list as it was very important in providing access to employment. He felt that the Action Plan had an ambitious timescale therefore it was important that the Partnership drill down into the detail of who is going to do what and by when.

It was suggested that Energy should be included within the Key Sectors.

It was also proposed that Major Centres should be included in Competitive Places. ONE highlighted that within the Place agenda they were looking for 15-20 key initiatives across the region. They were not looking for the submission of a large number of projects. Four key projects had already been identified for County Durham within the RES. It was highlighted that this Action Plan was not just about Single Programme spend.

It was highlighted that the Learning and Skills Council also had significant financial resources and the Partnership should take this opportunity to say to the LSC what investment priorities they would like to see in conjunction with ONE.

Communities England would also be a good potential funding source once it was fully operational. Projects with a strong housing agenda were also important. The LSC highlighted the private sector as the understated player that needed to be fully utilised.

It was agreed that an additional ODG would need to be organised to discuss the Action Plan.

**Agreed      Action: Secretariat**

## **8. Any Other Business**

### **Single Programme arrangements post March 2008**

The Board had been provided with a copy of the letter from One NorthEast detailing the delivery arrangements post March 2008. There were no further questions at this point.

## **European Programme**

A new operating structure had been set up for the European Programme. There were still some technical issues but these were being addressed. It was hoped that there would be an approval by the end of the year.

## **9. Forward programme of meetings**

18 July 2007, 14:00 in Committee Room 1b, County Hall

15 October 2007, 14:00 in Committee Room 1a, County Hall

24 January 2008, 14:00 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, County Hall

24 April 2008, 14:00 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, County Hall

24 July 2008, 14:00 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, County Hall