

**County Durham Economic Partnership
Board
25 January 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
Cllr Alan Cox	Durham County Council Member
John Pearson	District Council Chief Officer (Derwentside)
Cllr David Llewelyn	District Council Member (Derwentside)
Sue Parkinson	Business & Enterprise Group Chair (Temp)
Chris Davy	Area Tourism Partnership Chair
Melanie Sensicle	Area Tourism Partnership Chief Officer
Claire Williams	CDEP Secretariat
Jim Darlington	Government Office North East Observer
Joanna Tait	Further Education Observer
Tom Crompton	Learning & Skills Council Member
Nick Muse	One NorthEast Observer

1. Apologies;

Stacey Hall	One NorthEast
Prof. Phil Jones	Durham University

2. Declarations of interest

None.

2.a. Comments by Chair and members

Ken Jarrold welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted three areas on which he would welcome comments and advice from Partners.

1. Environment of work
2. Method of working
3. Priorities

Environment of work. Ken Jarrold highlighted that there were currently a number of developments which created a challenging environment for the Partnership's work. These included the Local Government White Paper, the Treasury Review, the Lyons Enquiry, the Leitch Review, the Eddington Review, the Baker Review, the City Regions debate (opportunities and threats), ONE and the future of SRPs, the Partnership review, Durham County Council review of Economic Development and Regeneration, the Audit Commission inspection and the review and new arrangements of Business Support.

Method of working. Ken highlighted eight points;

1. The Partnership should be genuinely inclusive to both the public and private sectors.

2. It should be independent of any one organisation, which would link in with the recommendations for an independent Secretariat.
3. He wanted it to be a real partnership therefore there would need to be mutual respect and mutual understanding.
4. The Board should concentrate on substance as well as process.
5. There should be a focus on strategy as well as funding.
6. There needed to be a rigorous analysis of what the Partnership was going to deliver including investment decisions and what was needed to achieve these goals.
7. County Durham should be represented at the regional and national level.
8. It was hoped that the university would become fully involved in the Partnership's work.

Priorities. Ken explained that one area he was particularly passionate about was the issues of skills and hoped that the Partnership could play a key role in the skills agenda. He highlighted some of the key statistics which had come out of the Leitch Review.

Ken explained that he hoped that within a few years the Partnership would be seen as leaders in Economic Development. He wanted the work of the Partnership to make a fundamental difference to the future of children and young people.

He emphasised however that he was very happy for comments on other issues, either at the meeting or over the next few weeks, but that these were just a few opening thoughts.

- It was agreed that the Leitch Report be an agenda item at the next meeting. **Action: Secretariat**
- It was highlighted that GONE was also going through a review process, the Treasury were carrying out a comprehensive spending review and the RSS were all areas which could also affect the work of the Partnership.
- The move to an independent Chair and the possibility of an independent Secretariat was welcomed by ONE.

Agreed

Items for decision

3. County Durham Economic Partnership Review

Bob Ward highlighted the key points from the report which had been previously circulated. He highlighted that the work of the Board was to be more focused. The Officer Delegated Group (ODG) would meet more regularly, consider matters delegated by the Board and look at the technical details for example with regard to funding. The Senior Advisory Panel (SAP) would be a broader group to ensure it was a fully inclusive Partnership engaging with a wider audience. There would also be some important changes to the working groups and the membership of these groups would become more strategic to focus discussions.

Protocol of representation

The Board members were reminded that it was their responsibility to consult and report back to their constituency. There also needed to be continuity of attendance at the Board meetings and as such substitutions would not be acceptable, unless it was an organisations with observer status. Support officers could attend in the absence of the lead officer but it would be in an observer role. It was suggested that paragraph 7.2 should be reworded to reflect that.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

The Board was asked to agree:

The new Terms of Reference for the Partnership Groups;

It had been proposed that the **Business and Enterprise Working Groups** should be merged into the Business and Enterprise Working Group. Representatives of the two groups had discussed the merger in a meeting brokered by Sue Parkinson and were supportive of the proposals. It was felt that the role of this group should be made explicit , it should potentially have more of an evaluation and scrutiny role and that there should be a clear steer and distinction between the enterprise and business agendas as they were very different. It was asked where LEGI fitted into the structure and whether one of the District reps could feed into the Business and Enterprise Working Group. It was felt that the membership was broadly acceptable but it was requested that the DCC rep actively engage with the enterprise education side of the LEA to ensure complete and appropriate input at the meeting. It was suggested that the group be tasked with a proposal to look at how to include the SME perspective in the group and also consider further the issue of a private sector chair.

Agreed

The FE establishments stated that they would welcome the opportunity to engage with this group as the colleges were very much engaged with business support.

Action: B&E Working Group

It was proposed that the **Knowledge Economy Group** should change to Advisory Status, as a cross cutting issue which would fit across a number of groups, with meetings to be held every 6 months.

Agreed

In order for the Partnership to pool expertise to consider rural policy and counter-balance the city regions debate it was suggested that a **Rural Advisory Group** should be set up. This group would also make rural funding and project decisions as well as feeding into the LAA. It was suggested that the National Farmers Union (NFU) could be invited to attend as they were good representatives of a range of different sized operations.

Agreed

It was suggested that reference to the Business Support Network (BSN) and Business Link County Durham (BLCD) needed to be tidied up and clarified within the documents.

Appointment of a Vice-Chair from within the Board membership

Cllr Alan Cox nominated Chris Davy as the Vice Chair.

Agreed

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Partnership Groups;

Physical Development Working Group – the lead organisation would remain as DCC.

Agreed

Learning and Skills – Nick James would remain as Chair of this working group.

Agreed

Business and Enterprise Working Group – It was suggested that Sue Parkinson act as the interim Chair of the new group, this had been endorsed by the two merging groups.

Agreed

Economic Regeneration Working Group – John Pearson resigned as Chair in light of his new role as one of the two district representatives on the Board and nominated Richard Prisk as his successor due to his experience.

Agreed

Rural Advisory Group – nominations for the Chair were requested from Board members by 9 February 2007.

Action: All

Knowledge Economy Advisory Group – given the changes to this group it would need to be confirmed that John Anstee was still prepared to chair the group.

Action: Secretariat

Area Tourism Partnership – the ATP would act as the Tourism Working Group for the Partnership. This group is chaired by Chris Davy and the vice chair is John Poland.

Agreed

It was felt that the ATP should be involved in the Physical Development Working Group as the role of the ATMAP would influence this work.

Agreed

Action: PD Working Group

The draft work programme for the Board was seen as a living document, which should be treated seriously and revised by the Board on a quarterly basis. Any member of the Board was welcome to amend the content of the work programme at any time. Board Members should discuss work programme items with the Secretariat.

It was requested that papers were circulated 10 days in advance of the meeting together with a rolling 12 month schedule of all meetings.

Action: Secretariat

4. County Durham Economic Strategy (CDES)

Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances John McCreadie of EKOS Consulting could not attend the meeting and provide the necessary presentation. It was therefore agreed, by the group, to forward any final comments on the CDES to the Secretariat by 9 February.

Action: All

The corrections required with regard to the population figures had already been noted and the consultants would be correcting them. It was agreed that the group would task the Secretariat and the ODG with the preparation of a brief for the Action Plan, consideration of the consultation framework and timing for the CDES to go out to wider consultation. Progress would be reported back to the Board in due course.

Agreed

5. Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan

Bob Ward explained that the RES Action Plan report requested the Partnership to approve the response to the RES Action Plan, to be submitted to ONE in time for the deadline of Tuesday 30th January 2007.

It was highlighted that the Partnership had already submitted initial views to ONE in the form of a letter to Pat Ritchie in November 2006.

As part of the RES Action Plan a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) had also developed to ensure environmental issues were incorporated into the Action Plan. The Partnership's response to the SEA was contained in the 3 page 'detailed response'. Both responses had been developed with input from across the Partnership.

The central message of the response was twofold; that the Partnership supported the concept of 'a City Region with many economic hearts' as proposed in the RES Action Plan; and that County Durham believed that it was in a strong position to make a major contribution to regional GVA. Concern was expressed that the RES approach to business and enterprise and worklessness and skills issues represented 'more of the same'. In these themes in particular there was also concern that the targets were overly optimistic and would not be achieved without more radical proposals.

It also provided an opportunity for the Partnership to highlight a number of broader concerns in relation to the constraints placed on the County by the RSS, and the focus on urban cores to the exclusion of the wider city region.

No further detailed comments were made in the meeting but any final comments were requested by 9 February and should be forwarded to the Secretariat. Subject to any further comments being received it was **agreed** that the response be submitted to ONE.

Action: All

6. Single Programme Update

Claire Williams presented the Single Programme report which covered the financial position to the end of Quarter 2. The report highlight key issues around spend for the year, particularly in relation to capital projects, as the Agency had placed additional conditions on projects at a late stage which had delayed the approval process. The Secretariat had met with other SRPs and were producing a co-ordinated response on these issues for agreement by the Partnership.

Slippage requests had been made to ONE and the report outlined the process and timescales for agreement.

Output information was provided to the Partnership on a quarterly basis, and the report outlined the position up to the end of quarter 2. There were currently no issues around the achievement of outputs.

Work was ongoing on the programme for 2007/08 and two processes were running concurrently in order to establish priorities for delivery. The Secretariat were required to submit a number of Project Initiation Forms (PIFs) to ONE in December, and the Partnership had been working on a number of transformational project activities for submission with the County's input to the RES Action Plan at the end of January. These two processes were now being aligned and the Partnership would need to take decisions on prioritisation in the coming months.

The Board **agreed** that:

- Technical issues within the programme be delegated to the Officer Delegated Group.
- The circulated paper would form the basis of a meeting with Ed Rowley and the Officer Delegated Group on Capital project approvals and details of the problems encountered would be submitted to ONE.
- Slippage requests from projects would be considered by the Officer Delegated Group. This should include discussions with the Working Groups to look at the explanations behind the slippage.
- The process for prioritisation of activity for 2007/08 to be considered by the Officer Delegated Group.
- Position statements for the Transformational Interventions were requested to be circulated by correspondence.
- Discussions needed to take place, outside of this meeting, between ONE, the Secretariat and the ATP regarding alignment of work, working relationships and funding routes.

7. County Durham Local Area Agreement

John Pearson provided a short summary of the paper that had been circulated. He clarified that in paragraph 11 he chaired the block champion group but that anyone who wanted to attend could. The group included outcome champions, as the CDEP body was charged with delivering outcomes. It was emphasised that the Partnership needed to be more involved in this process. He suggested that regular programme reports should be fed into the ODG which would then be reported to the Board.

Agreed

The 6 monthly review had been carried out and it was felt that the Partnership was making good progress. It might be difficult to hit some of the stretch targets and as they couldn't be renegotiated it meant the Partnership needed to take this seriously.

8. Consultation on the North East European Competitive and Employment Programme

Claire Williams presented the report on the North East European Competitive Employment programme and explained that from 2007 the structure of European Funding would change. She highlighted that the North East was relatively fortunate as it had received the largest per capita allocation of any English region but that this reflected the level of deprivation within the area.

It was agreed that Partners (through the SAP) should be given the opportunity to comment, in time to formulate a response for the 31 March 2007 deadline, and the final response would be considered by the ODG in conjunction with Ken Jarrold. It was also felt that it would be useful for the Partnership to take up Government Office's offer to attend a sub regional meeting to discuss the ERDF Draft Operational Programme. **Agreed Action: Secretariat**

Items for information

9. Audit Commission Inspection of Regeneration in County Durham

Linda Edworthy presented the report on the Audit Commission Inspection to bring Board members up to date. It was highlighted that Derwentside District Council would now only be taking part in the 'light touch' work rather than the full inspection. At this stage it was not clear what a 'light touch' really meant. It was explained that this wasn't an inspection of the Partnership it was an inspection of the Councils, but that it would be examining how the Councils worked in Partnership. Therefore some of the recommendations might be of interest to the Partnership.

10. Any Other Business

Linda Edworthy informed the Board that the **Durham County Council review of Economic Development and Regeneration and CDDC** was being carried out by GHK and the first stage report had been submitted to Cabinet. One of the recommendations was the winding up of CDDC as a separate entity by bringing its function into the County Council. As a result of this Kingsley Smith had decided to resign from CDDC. The creation of two joint venture companies was recommended, dealing with capital support to businesses and maximising capital assets. The final recommendation was for the formation of an independent secretariat. Further work would be carried out in the next month to clarify some of the more technical issues. Bob Ward emphasised that the recommendations had been noted by Cabinet and that further work was requested with no decisions having yet been taken.

Joanna Tait requested details of the **Board membership** and suggested there should be some official correspondence with the current members of the Working Groups who would be potentially disbanded to explain the position and thank them for their contribution to date.

11. Forward programme of meetings

26 April 2007, 14:00 in the Collier Room, St Hild and St Bede College

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 venue to be confirmed