

**County Durham Economic Partnership
Officer Delegated Group
Tuesday 13 March 2007**

In attendance;

Bob Ward	CDEP Lead Officer Secretariat
Zoë Thirlaway	CDEP Secretariat
Linda Edworthy	Durham County Council Chief Officer & Physical Development Group Chair
Donna Cook	CDEP Secretariat
Tarryn Lloyd Payne	Business & Enterprise Group / CDEP Secretariat
John Pearson	District Council Chief Officer (Derwentside)
Richard Prisk	Economic Regeneration Group Chair
Melanie Sensicle	Area Tourism Partnership Chief Officer
Nick James	Learning and Skills Group Chair
John McCreadie	EKOS Consulting
Annie Oldfield	ADIT Consultancy

1. Apologies;

Sue Parkinson	Business & Enterprise Group Chair (Temp)
Neil Stokell	District Council Chief Officer (Teesdale)
John Anstee	Knowledge Economy Advisory Group Chair

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. County Durham Economic Partnership Review

Bob Ward welcomed everyone to the first Officer Delegated Group. The group's first obligation was to nominate a vice chair. The group nominated and agreed John Pearson. **Agreed**

Bob highlighted that the Private Sector were not yet engaged with the Partnership and explained that Ken Jarrold was keen to hold an event in 2-3 months time with approximately 6 key private sector organisations in order to move this forward. It was suggested that the Secretariat should organise this event. Linda Edworthy highlighted that the board had charged the Business and Enterprise Working Group to look at private sector involvement in the business support and enterprise agendas and the ODG to look at Private Sector involvement in the Partnership's activities in general and that the two tasks should be linked together to avoid duplication.

The event would be tailored around how the Private Sector feel they could become involved in Partnership activities and to broaden their understanding of Partnership work. Ken Jarrold had requested Susan Johnson co-chair the event to encourage joint working. Links with the NECC, the ATP and the Knowledge Economy Advisory Group also needed to be factored in.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

Linda Edworthy presented the work programme, which had flowed out of the Board work programme. She explained that this document should never be static and that suggestions for additional items were welcomed.

Additional areas of work identified included City Regions, Regional Housing Strategy, Regional Funding Allocations, the next review of industrial land and the 2012 Welcome Legacy. Recurring themes would be rural proofing, equality and diversity, LEGI and the LAA.

Bob Ward raised a number of membership issues including the lack of a chair for the Rural Advisory Group and whether the ODG should invite observers onto the Group. It was agreed at this stage that only ONE and GONE should be invited to the ODG as observers.

Agreed

4. County Durham Economic Strategy

John McCreadie provided a presentation on the CDES. He suggested that the strategy was not transformational but rather somewhere between stabilisation and revival.

John McCreadie explained that the main options for the Partnership in terms of the strategy were to;

- reduce the number of spatial priorities,
- maintain the current 4 priorities but risk a lack of focus and possibly lack of regional support,
- drastically reduce the 4 corridors to achieve greater focus.

The need for clarity around Durham City and what was actually needed was discussed. It was agreed that Durham City was a key activity, there was a desire for a good mix between tourism and commercial activity in and around Durham City and the need for a conference centre in the City was identified.

John McCreadie suggested that all the developments within the corridors that the Partnership would like to do, but don't necessarily have funds for, should still be identified and investigated to avoid cash driven decision making. However, there should be a more holistic vision for the County.

It was suggested that the terminology needed to be clarified in the document as it meant different things to different people. John suggested that the strategy should contain the 4 priorities but that they should be more realistically presented to allow for greater flexibility. It was suggested that in order to take this forward an economic rational / position statement would need to be drawn up which would look at all areas for the next 10-15 years.

It was agreed that the contractual relationship between EKOS, ARUP and the Partnership would need to be reviewed and that the Secretariat would look into this together with financial implications and forward timetable.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

The group agreed that the Partnership were not in a position to go out to consultation at this point as further work needed to be carried out by John McCreadie as discussed.

5. Tyne and Wear City Region Response to the RES Action Plan

Linda Edworthy explained that County Durham issues had been fed into the Tyne and Wear City Regions (TWCR) Response through the TWCR Chief Executive's Group. However, initially very few Durham issues were included in the document. Following further discussions most of the County Durham Transformational Interventions were included in the document but they were not recognised with the same level of weighting. It was explained that the Partnership were asked to endorse the document, but it was highlighted at this stage it would make little difference to the final document submitted.

After discussion it was felt that the Partnership could not endorse the document as they were not happy with the process which had been undertaken to reach this point. Although the Partnership accepted the position they were now in they wanted to make clear to One NorthEast how powerless they had been during these negotiations and that the outcome in their view was unsatisfactory.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would draft a letter on behalf of the Partnership expressing their concerns about the process, reinforcing the need for the County Durham Investment Plan to be included in the RES supporting documents, but looking positively to the future and the delivery of the RES. A copy of the letter would be copied to the TWCR Chief Executive's Group. The draft letter would be circulated to the Partnership for endorsement.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

6. Single Programme Update

Donna Cook highlighted the key points from the Single Programme update report. She explained that since the report had been finalised the final interim claim had been submitted and the actual forecast underspend figures were £154,755 capital and £431,746 revenue.

Donna stated that the slippage request which had been submitted to ONE had now been approved and the Secretariat now required official requests from project sponsors to carry over funding.

Additional papers were circulated to the group detailing ONE's response to all of the PIFS which had been submitted, highlighting deferred and rejected PIFs.

The group were asked for agreement to send out the summary of PIF responses and programme position documents to the wider Partnership.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

Deferred and rejected PIFS - it was suggested that the Secretariat work in conjunction with the Working Group Chairs to identify problems and see if the

provision of additional information to ONE would change the outcome of the decision.

Agreed Action: Secretariat and WG Chairs

Future funding commitments - there were still major problems with the number of projects which were 'still to be developed'. It was suggested that there needed to be a higher level of over-programming. Resources also needed to be provided to push forward projects to delivery. It was suggested that capacity could be imposed on project sponsors to ensure that projects proceed within the timescales required.

Agreed Action: Secretariat and WG Chairs

7. County Durham Local Area Agreement

John Pearson provided a short summary of the report which had been previously circulated. He highlighted the need to prepare a roll forward delivery plan and suggested this should be delegated to the Coordinating Group who would then provide the draft plan for consideration by the ODG and the CDEP Board.

Agreed Action: LAA Coordinating Group

It was highlighted that there seemed to be some confusion between Business Link County Durham (BLCD) and Business Link North East (BLNE). It was explained that BLCD were currently the lead but this would be transferring over to BLNE.

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

The key points from the NEECEP report were highlighted and it was agreed that the Secretariat would produce a draft response which would be provided to the Senior Advisory panel for consideration. A final draft would then be circulated to the ODG for their endorsement.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

9. County Durham Broadband Analysis

Annie Oldfield from ADIT Consultancy provided a presentation on Broadband provision in County Durham. She highlighted the areas within the County which were of concern and the discussions which were taking place with BT to overcome these issues. She explained that North Yorkshire was a good example of what could be achieved in a similar topography to County Durham and agreed to provide more information.

Action: ADIT

The group agreed that the aspiration was to have a wireless County which would help entrepreneurship and underpin new economic activity. It was decided that the Knowledge Economy Advisory Group would look at this work and take it forward.

Agreed Action: Knowledge Economy Advisory Group

10. County Durham Image and Reputation

Melanie Sensicle explained that work was now being carried out on Image and Reputation work. An internationally renowned company called Saffron had been appointed to carry out the work and the inception meeting had taken place. It was agreed that the project plan for this work would be shared with the ODG together with the official briefing note on the process (copy attached). This would ensure that everyone had the same key messages and information.

Action: Melanie Sensicle

The political sensitivities around this work were identified and Melanie was requested to take them into account at all stages of the project. It was requested that the District Councils were made aware of this work before the media were informed.

Agreed Action: Melanie Sensicle

11. Pathfinder update

The group were informed that there had been an extra £65,000 of funding provided by Defra. The Pathfinder had started later than hoped so this would be treated as an extension to effectively complete the project. A national conference would be taking place in June which would be a good opportunity for individual pathfinders to learn lessons from each other, which could be fed back into this group.

Nick James highlighted that the Learning and Skills Council were already working with KSA and Sue Dawson on the Eastgate Skills Study.

12. Any Other Business

None

13. Forward programme of meetings - all meetings start at 9:30

- Tuesday 13 March 2007 – County Hall
- Wednesday 11 April 2007 – County Hall
- Friday 18 May 2007 – TBC
- Thursday 28 June 2007 – County Hall
- Thursday 16 August 2007 – County Hall
- Thursday 27 September 2007 – County Hall
- Thursday 8 November 2007 – County Hall