

**County Durham Economic Partnership
Officer Delegated Group
09:30, Monday 25 June 2007
Emergency Planning Room, County Hall**

MINUTES

In attendance:

Bob Ward	CDEP Lead Officer Secretariat
Zoë Thirlaway	CDEP Secretariat
Linda Edworthy	Durham County Council Chief Officer & Physical Development Group Chair
Lindsey Crawford	CDEP Secretariat
John Pearson	District Council Representative (Derwentside)
Trevor Watson	District Council Representative (Teesdale)
Richard Prisk	Economic Regeneration Working Group Chair
John Anstee	Knowledge Economic Advisory Group Chair
Melanie Sensicle	Area Tourism Partnership Chief Officer
Rob Statham	Durham University
Rob Strachan	Government Office North East
Victoria Catesby	Durham County Council (agenda item 5)
Chris Jones	Millar Research (agenda item 5)

1. Apologies

Sue Parkinson	Business and Enterprise Working Group Chair
Nick Muse	One NorthEast
Neil Stokell	District Council Representative (Teesdale)

2. Declarations of Interest.

None.

Minutes of the last meeting

John Pearson highlighted that he is not the Chair of the Economic Regeneration Working Group and was in fact representing the District Councils.

Richard Prisk was the Chair of the Economic Regeneration Working Group, he had submitted his apologies but they had not been noted.

Item 9 - County Durham Economic Partnership Review - it was highlighted that the LAA Partnership Framework survey was being undertaken. The question was raised as to how the CDEP were feeding into this process and in particular to the Environmental question. Linda Edworthy explained that she had interviewed herself. The environmental question essentially asked where the Partnership saw itself. Concern was raised that assumptions could be being made and that areas of work could slip through the cracks. It was felt that there some work areas of the Partnership needed to be horizontal and issues such as the environment and skills filter across a number of blocks. It was felt that cross cutting themes had not necessarily worked in the past as

areas had been forgotten, therefore there would be benefits in Environment being associated with one particular block. It was agreed that it hadn't been discussed at the Partnership yet but that it could be picked up at the ODG due to be held on 2 July.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

John Pearson's comment under item 9 should have read that agendas should contain fewer items so that each item could be discussed in more detail. His comment under Any Other Business should have read that he did not feel the Partnership had enough knowledge regarding skills as it was a key agenda item. It was agreed that the gap in Partnership knowledge was being addressed.

Items for decision:

3. Single Programme Position Statement

Lindsey Crawford introduced the Single Programme report which had been circulated before the meeting. She explained that they had now received the official offer letter from One NorthEast for £15m Capital and £5m Revenue. At this point however only 49% of the programme had been approved which was raising serious concerns for achieving spend at this stage. It was hoped that consultants would be appointed shortly to provide a project management resource. The table in Annex 1 detailed all the projects and their level of risk. It was highlighted that some projects already had project management bought in and that in the assessment of the projects the current level of management support should be taken into account. It was emphasised that there needed to be an open and honest interrogation of projects, as there was a danger the money would be taken away from the County. The Working Groups and the Secretariat were given the power 12 months ago to carry out this interrogation.

A risk assessment on likely spend was requested and it was suggested that any project over £1m should have its own risk register.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

There was also a high risk that despite over-programming there would still be an underspend on revenue and as such they would need to be looking to bring forward new activity.

It was suggested that this report should be circulated to all of the Working Group Chairs and the Working Groups should be charged with looking at the capital and revenue position and to provide an update to the next ODG and Board meetings.

Agreed Action: Working Groups

4. County Durham Events Strategy

Linda Edworthy presented the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. She explained that the concept had been approved in September 2006 and the Secretariat had been looking at implementation. The aim was to have a more co-ordinated approach to all the strategic events in the County. The Events Officer post was being proposed as a 9 month

secondment in line with the funding period available. It was hoped that this would be enough time to lay the groundwork. The post holder would use the Brass Festival to produce a model for organising large scale events. The ATP had already been doing some work on this already. Hypothetically if there were no restrictions on funding they would like the post to run until 2010 when the region would publish a new way forward. It was felt that the desire for future funding should be written into the bid.

Agreed Action: ATP / Secretariat

5. Stanhope Retail Distinctiveness Action Plan

Victoria Catesby provided an introduction to the key issues in the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The allocation of funding for Stanhope and the other Market Towns would end in March 2008. By the end of 2008 it will be known whether the Eastgate project would be going ahead. Millar Consultancy were appointed in January and have looked at the impact and how to maximise the economic benefit for the area. This had been a very detailed study which had looked at the key elements that make a place distinctive. The wider impact had not yet been investigated though and the consultants suggested that the Partnership should look at linking sub regional centres to encourage multi stop visits.

It was agreed that the isolation of Stanhope should be used as its asset. Good quality and family places to eat were identified as missing from the overall offer of the town.

The recommendations which were being proposed for this project were for the ODG to support the delivery of the Stanhope Retail Distinctiveness Action Plan. This would require the Partnership to negotiate with ONE to see if interim funding arrangements could be put in place to account for the potential break in funding between the end of MTP funding in March 2008 and the expected outcome of the Eastgate planning application at the end of 2008. They would also need revenue funding to support the delivery of part of the action plan until the decision was made on Eastgate and depending on what that decision was the level of investment required for the remainder of the Action Plan would need to be reassessed.

It was felt that this was important that this project continued in terms of improving Stanhope. It was agreed that the Partnership needed a better understanding of the network of Market Towns. It was agreed that the group were happy for the case to be championed. More discussion would be needed once the decision on Eastgate had been made before any decision could be made on capital expenditure. This phase would only cover the planning element of the project. Details of the timescales and actual levels of funding required would be put into the CDES. It was suggested that this may amount to approximately £80,000 for 2007/08 for the market town manager and co-ordinator post and £120,000 for revenue based projects.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

Items for Information:

6. County Durham Economic Strategy and Action Plan

A special CDEP Board meeting had taken place to discuss the CDES. This had resulted in 16 detailed points which would be dealt with by EKOS and 2 more complicated issues that were being dealt with in a separate meeting with the northern District Councils. The consultation would start in August.

Shared Intelligence were currently working on the CDES Action Plan and had been visiting various organisations including the District Councils and the LSC. It was apparent that aspirations for Single Programme funding were high and the ODG would need to look at these in more detail at the meeting on 2 July. It was hoped that ONE would be able to attend that meeting. Everyone agreed that the County needed to increase its aspirations but that the Partnership needed to be careful about raising expectations.

It was emphasised that the Strategy and the Action Plan needed to link in with the City Regions and Science Cities agendas. It was hoped that improved engagement with the University would help with this. It was suggested that the Partnership should be looking at what their aspirations for the University were from an economic development perspective. It was agreed that the University wasn't specifically recognised within the Strategy and any recommendations should be forwarded to the Secretariat in the next few days. It was felt that this shouldn't just be about the Science Cities agenda, the ambitions for the University Business School also needed to be taken into account. It was explained that spin out companies needed assistance to move out into the world and that this assistance should be provided through the business school. It was highlighted that the University had had an innovation specialist, through Business Link, who had come in 2-3 days a week. This had not been continued due to the transition from BLCD and BLNE but the importance of this role had been impressed upon Alistair McColl and he has agreed to look into it.

The University were currently looking at their own priorities and aspirations but it was hoped that the Partnership could be engaged with the University as soon as possible so that they could be involved in the discussions from an early stage. It was suggested that the Partnership should form relationships with the other Universities in the region and not just with regard to business spin outs. The Partnership would need to look at ways to engage with these organisations, potentially through a seminar workshop.

Agreed Action: Secretariat

7. LAA Update

John Pearson provided a verbal update. He explained that two of the stretch targets were currently tied up in statistical nuances but that overall they seemed to be heading in the right direction. They were currently updating the delivery plan which would need to come to the ODG and Board.

JobCentre Plus had been tasked with looking at the statistical / performance issue and form a judgement on whether the targets would be met.

ESF was co-financing the funding allocated to New College Durham but it was felt that they were unlikely to achieve their targets due to the time limit on the funding and the nature of the market.

Further work needed to be carried out as it was not clear which baseline figures were being used.

Action: John Pearson / Secretariat

8. LEGI Update

Richard Prisk provided a verbal update. He explained that in terms of the present research the project board had meet 3 times and the delivery plan was now 80% completed. The key pressure would now be on delivery.

Recruits were being sort for 19 posts under the B-Enterprising project. These post holders would act as coaches, to help change attitudes, and business advisors. This was currently the largest strand of activity.

A franchising model was being developed and a Board was being set up. This area of activity would be closely linked to the Place element.

Following a visit from DCLG it was apparent that they were not delivering as quickly as they had hoped. The transition between BLCD and BLNE had not run smoothly which had had a negative impact on delivery of activity. It was highlighted that discussions with Alistair McColl had ensured BLNE's commitment to work with the Partnership.

It was agreed that the LEGI delivery plan would need to come to the ODG.

Agreed Action: Richard Prisk

9. London 2010 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games

Linda Edworthy provided a verbal update on the Olympic Games and suggested the briefing note be circulated with the minutes. (Copy attached)

Action: Secretariat

It was felt that there were potential opportunities for the County such as contracts and training camps, but that there were potentially a number of adverse affects too which had not yet been fully assessed, such as a reduction in funding streams and shortage of construction workers.

10. Any other business

The economy of the region – the County had narrowly missed out on objective 1. The downward trend of the County legitimised the approach to request special status. County Durham is in a favourable position in terms of the national statistics. It was agreed that this needed to tie back into the County Durham Economic Strategy.

Inward migration – It was felt that there were a number of positive stories regarding inward migration but there were also issues over social tensions. Community cohesion was key and it was believed that if the issues were dealt with now and the positive messages promoted then it could avoid more

serious problems in the future. It was explained that 'Enterprise insight' were looking at inward migration and enterprise and were being very supportive.

11. Forward Programme of Meetings

- Thursday 16 August 2007 – County Hall
- Thursday 27 September 2007 – County Hall
- Thursday 8 November 2007 – County Hall
- Tuesday 18 December 2007 – County Hall