

Minutes

Economic Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 28th February, 2006, Town Hall

Present: Councillor Hopgood (in the Chair), Cowper, Gill, McDonnell, Pape, Rochford, Shaw, Simmons, Simpson, Stoddart and Thomson

Also Present: Councillors Dickie, Gibbon, Howarth, Kellett, Kinghorn, Marsden, Turnbull and Young.

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 31st January, 2006

The minutes were agreed subject to the clarification of a figure being obtained from Mr. Power of PCT to give numbers of referrals who have completed the exercise course.

3. Draft Report of Economic Scrutiny Panel

That subject to the inclusion of the competition figures of exercise referrals the report be submitted to the next Scrutiny Committee for approval.

4. SRB Areas

The Head of Community Services and the Economic and Community Development Manager had been invited to the Meeting to give an overview of SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) Areas. The Economic and Community Development Manager explained to Members the background of the work of SRB and how the Authority has to compete for funding with other local authorities in the district. The Community Development team bid for funds and a grant of £901K was awarded to be divided out amongst the 12 villages. City of Durham Council had committed to £430K, more investment funding would be attracted as projects progressed. There were 7 individual projects ongoing, three of which City of Durham were taking the lead providing funding to employ staff and an activities pot to move the projects along. The 12 villages were identified as the most deprived areas in the district. The current round, round 6 is capacity building – working with local communities to raise aspirations of what can be achieved.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions.

Members praised the excellent work of SRB, however, while it was agreed that SRB had been a great success, some members spoke of the resentment in some villages that they received nothing even though many of the residents had worked in the neighbouring village colliery.

Members asked what mechanisms were in place. Monitoring mechanisms go through three stages, the boundaries of the areas are set by Government, however, Community Development team is available for all areas. Members who were familiar with the workings of SRB mentioned that measurements of social deprivation were taken.

Councillors highlighted the issue of match funding and this being a useful area to look into during the scrutiny. Members also asked what lessons were there to be learned as weaknesses' had been identified as late starters to the SRB schemes and that targets for 2005 were difficult to obtain and that targets for 2006 had already been reached as we enter the third month of the year.

5. Actions for Next Meeting

- Obtain Evaluations of Durham City Arts & Heart of the Villages
- Exit strategy for SRB5
- Invite a representative from SRB Board

Actions for Future Meetings

- Obtain prescriptive list of Partners with relevant information regarding funding.
- Obtain Measurable statistics, Capacity Building for regeneration in the Priority Coalfield booklet gives information from 1997 can this be compared with more up to date information.
- Are other departments aware of the work of SRB

Meeting terminated at 6.30 p.m.