



County Durham  
Economic Partnership

## MINUTES

<b>Meeting</b>	County Durham Economic Partnership Board
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> April 2019
<b>Time</b>	13.00 – 15.00
<b>Venue</b>	Conference Room 2 53-54, County Hall

### Attendees:

Brian Tanner (BT)	Chair
Sue Parkinson (SP)	Resources
Brian Archer (BA)	Business Competitiveness
Bill Fullen (BF)	Inclusive Growth
Dawn Fairlamb (DF)	People
Jon Gluyas (JG)	Ideas and Innovation
Ian Thompspon (IT)	Without Portfolio
Jo Laverick (JL)	VCS
Simon Hanson (SH)	Business
Andy Bailey (ACB)	Partnerships, Durham County Council
Angela Brown (AB)	Partnerships, Durham County Council

### Speakers

Cllr Batey (Cllr AB)	Durham County Council
Diane Close (DC)	Durham County Council
Catherine Johns (CJ)	Business Durham

### 1. Welcome

BT thanked everyone for attending today. He introduced Andy Bailey to the Board, ACB is the new Team Leader for the Partnership Team.

DF and JL were also introduced to the Board as a new Board members.

BT mentioned that this was BF first meeting as a Board member. Cllr Batey, Diane Close and Catherine Johns were all welcomed

## 2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes from the meeting in January were circulated in advance of the meeting and were agreed as a true and accurate record

### *Matters Arising:*

- BT spoke to Dawn Fairlamb in relation to asking her to be portfolio rep
- SP spoke to Michelle Rainbow who will be alternate to DF
- All Board members have now prepared plan on page as requested. It is thought there may need to be a Task and Finish group to discuss these and see what can be done. ACB suggested this could be done electronically.
- BT informed the Board that he had written to Tarryn on behalf of the CDEP to thank him for his support over the years.
- The Insights event took place in March – ACB has circulated information for this

## 3. Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee Support provided to the retail sector by Durham County Council – Presented by Diane Close and Cllr Alison Batey

Cllr AB discussed the report which had been circulated to the Board from Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Review of support provided to retail sector by Durham County Council. The purpose of the report was to present the key findings and recommendations of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Review Group report focusing on the support provided by DCC to the retail sector.

It was an intense investigation over a short period of time which helped to develop the full report. Cllr AB thanked IT and SH for supporting this. She also thanked the Board for allowing her to attend today and being able to share the key findings. It was felt by scrutiny members as good timing as the County Durham Plan is at the next stage.

The review group held 11 meetings and internet shopping has impacted. Therefore, town centres are having to evolve. With the work carried out by James and Bryn in the Planning Team we will hold an event in June to discuss a mapping tool to help with improving communication events in town centres.

Cllr AB asked Board members to note the key findings in the report

DC mentioned the key findings dovetail with a service grouping piece of work and will monitor the progress and the first update will be available in next 6 months.

IT mentioned that two pots of funding had been announced.

- 1) Town Centres High Street Fund – have put in four bids for the county but not heard if it has been successful yet, the bid is for £5-15m
- 2) Stronger Town Fund – this was announced as £105m for North East. Guidance is not available yet.

Cllr AB said a lot of things that have been identified are quick wins so working more with AAPs should see some quick results.

It was mentioned that skills and training at micro level and self-employed level have a skills deficit and there needs to be an understanding of changes to town centres. Recommendations around business rates need to support that and relief should be available without having to apply for it

It was suggested that there is already training available and New College holds skills support for the workforce funds. We need to be making sure that what is out there already is available which is why we work in Partnership. There needs to be a conversation between DF and Colleen Peters around this and SP mentioned she will help DF with this if she can.

**Action: DF to speak to Colleen Peters**

#### **4. Business Durham Strategic Plan – Catherine Johns**

CJ gave an update on the Business Durham Strategic Plan. Business Durham has focused on what it can do that affects business growth. CJ will share information with the Board.

The Strategy will not replace other plans, but we need a robust evidence base. CJ mentioned she has sketched out table of contents and vision as to why we are doing what we are doing. “What is Durham” will be our narrative

Economic status and benchmarking data can be shared - Stuart Armstrong is looking at data to see how we compare with other regions.

Opportunities for growth - context statement still in development.

Next stage - what do next - Looking at grand challenges in Industrial Strategy - Healthy aging, clean growth, intelligent mobility

Looking at current support provision e.g. Mine water energy  
Need to look at the outputs and KPIs and what are longer term outcomes.

BA felt it important that the challenges be properly addressed, and we need to be sufficiently aligned to make of funding when available. We need to have an evidence base but it is quite narrow at the moment. Proposed Governance arrangements with themes make for much more powerful lobbying

It was felt we need to be focusing on grand challenges and how that part maps into county Durham.

It was asked how we were going to do it. We need to be very clear what the vision is in order to know where we want to be. We need to be clear what we think our priorities should be for the County’s economy.

BA - Suggested a workshop looking at where we are

BT – Suggestion to hold workshop - unless we get things joined up won’t move forward.

CJ - Would like cultural partnership involved

**Action: Workshop to be held to make sure we are all joined up moving forward**

## 5. Youth Aspirations Event – Dawn Fairlamb

DF reported on the Young people's Aspirations and Ambitions Seminar at Bishop Auckland Town Hall on 29<sup>th</sup> March. Around 78 people attended and Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham opened the event. The event focused on differences between aspiration and ambition

In relation to the next steps, DF highlighted that the issues in County Durham include:

- Highest levels of drug misuse in the region
- Deprivation
- Success stories often communicate negative messages
- Transition from Primary to Secondary schools – not all young people meet the levels  
Although funding is a big issue, it is not clear what we would do with money if we got it

DF felt that we need to identify things we can do to enable us to tackle some of the issues.

BT suggested that he and DF should speak to Glenn Robinson from the Partnership team to make sure this doesn't get lost off the agenda.

**Action: BT and DF to meet with Glenn Robinson**

## 6. Brexit Planning and Funding – Sue Parkinson

SP gave an update

She stated that the present position for EU funding commitment is that the Government will fund programmes to 2022 in the event of "No-deal Brexit". The Government has promised a subsequent Shared Prosperity Fund. This was announced 18 months ago but no criteria have yet emerged. The Cllr Hennig has joined leaders of other LEAs in writing to the Minister urging him to put proposals out for consultation as a matter of urgency. We need to be careful how SPF impacts on us.

The Industrial Strategy for NELEP area is being developed and SP mentioned that she is on the group, which is led by NELEP and is charged with looking at the economic evidence base to underpin the LIS. In addition, MHCLG have established an Evaluation Sub Group of the National Committee, part of the national governance arrangements for European funds, which is specifically charged with national evaluation of the current ESIF funds, and SP represents the Transitional Regions of England on this group.

There is a Stronger Towns fund. We need be looking at partnership agreements and at the leadership and management of programmes. A great example of Partnership working is the Durham Works Programme which supports Young People aged 16-24 to develop existing skills, identifying new ones and helping them into a range of training and job opportunities. It has £29.4m dedicated to employment funding. 5789 people have been employed so far through this programme and work is with 1000 employers in different industries.

The National Evaluation Panel is working with DWP Market Strategy, Head of YEI who is evaluating the programme and has agreed to host an event with the LEP. They will be looking to partners to show where investments should be made. If Board members agree, the panel would like to start working up how this can happen.  
The Board endorsed this.

**Action: The Board endorsed this going forward**

## **7. Powered by People – Brian Archer**

BA gave a presentation to the Board which included a video on Powered by People which aims to spread the word that Durham is a fantastic place in which to invest.

The Powered by People Campaign Strategy has not changed from what was presented to the Board just under a year ago. As well as the UK Industrial Strategy the LEP is developing a Regional Strategy.

The County presented to stakeholders in the House of Commons. There were around 120 people at Westminster.

### *Questions/Comments*

It was felt that Powered by People shows a powerful message

There was mixed feeling as to whether we should be shouting about what we have, especially as Brexit could mean we may longer be a transitional region. We may then need a new message. It was agreed there needs to be a balance in the message for different audiences, but it was also agreed that we need to be on the map. We have a lot of opportunities as well as a lot of need. We need to make sure that don't lose sight of the pockets of need that we have.

BT thanked BA for his presentation

## **8. Terms of Reference – For information**

BT stated that the TOR had been circulated for information

## **9. Updates from Working Groups**

### *Business, Enterprise & Skills Working Group*

SP informed the Board that at the last meeting in March all providers of ERDF Delivery programmes across the County were invited to give an update on their programmes. This was a very well attended and very informative meeting

### *Housing Forum*

IT mentioned that the main topic of discussion at the last Housing Forum meeting was around selective Licensing.

### *VCS*

JL felt there was not a lot of new stuff going on. Partnership working is strong particularly in relation to social prescribing and wellbeing. Looking to work with NHS on commissioning community-based activities.

BT mentioned we are now missing the link with the Rural Working Group at this meeting. AB will speak to Rachael McCoy and Graham Black to see if we can get briefing updates from the group

**Action: AB to speak to Rachael McCoy and Graham Black from Rural Working Group  
Durham University**

JG informed that he had provided information from the innovation plan to Catherine Johns for the business Durham plan. He had agreement that the current energy minister will come and visit to see what we are doing around that agenda. MPs Helen Goodman and Claire Perry will attend the University. JG has briefed Oliver Sherratt and will take this forward.

**10. Any Other Business**

DF informed Board members that New College have been successful with its bid to become the lead further education college for an Institute of Technology in the North East. They are one of only 12 selected across the UK. This is excellent news for our region and for the College and partners. Institute of Technology status comes with the promise to deliver high-quality technical qualifications and to provide a route for young people to gain industry skills required by the region.

BA mentioned that EU money is not the only pot of money available. We need to be aligning funding opportunities. We need to be aligning a pipeline to strategic priorities. We don't want to be funding-led.

Partners are to suggest relevant items for the next meeting. ACB will be charged to canvass for items for the next agenda.

- JG suggested County Durham Climate Emergency. – We have started to develop response which will be heard at OSE meeting and will it was proposed that we develop this for our next meeting
- SP would like to bring a paper to the next meeting outlining the overall approach to the resource's portfolio, for the Board to consider

**Action: ACB to source items for the CDEP Board agenda**

**11. Date and Time of next meeting – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July at 1pm**

BT thanked everyone for attending.