



## MINUTES

<b>Meeting</b>	County Durham Economic Partnership Board
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2020
<b>Time</b>	13.00 – 15.00
<b>Venue</b>	Online via Microsoft Teams

### Attendees:

Simon Hanson (SH)	Chair
Sue Parkinson (SP)	Resources
Sarah Slaven (SS)	Business Competitiveness
Jon Gluyas (JG)	Ideas and Innovation
Michelle Cooper (MC)	VCS Voice
Dawn Fairlamb (DF)	People
Ray Brewis (RB)	Infrastructure
Tom Gorman (TG)	Durham County Council
Alison Gittins (AG)	Durham Business Group
Andy Bailey (ACB)	Partnerships, Durham County Council
Angela Brown (AB)	Partnerships, Durham County Council (minutes)

### Speakers:

Vince Taylor (VT)	NECA/NELEP
Glenn Martin (GM)	Durham County Council
Helen Grayshan (HG)	Durham County Council

### Apologies:

Amy Harhoff (AH)	Without Portfolio
Joanna Laverick (JL)	VCS Voice

## **1. Welcome**

SH welcomed everyone to the first Board meeting since he took over as Chair. He gave a special thanks to Brian Tanner for all his hard work over the years. He thanked SP for chairing the last meeting.

SH mentioned that there would be a change to today's agenda as Amy Harhoff had diary clash so this item will now be from Helen Grayshan who will update on Green Growth for County Durham.

The aim of the CDEP over the next two years is to drive the recovery and regeneration of the County Durham Economy. We have some great assets right across the County and need to ensure we get the right support for the right people at the right time so we can continue with the economy recovery and drive it for the wider region.

We will be publishing a plan. There is a commitment to publish draft plan by the end of this month with a more formalised document in September, which won't be final as things will change and fluctuate

SH initiated round table introductions

## **2. Revised Terms of Reference for CDEP Board**

The revised Terms of Reference were circulated with the papers and Board members were asked to read in advance of the meeting.

**Action: The Board endorsed the updated TOR**

## **3. County Durham Green Growth**

HG gave a presentation to the Board on the low carbon and the economy work that is been carried out across County Durham. She works in the Low Carbon Team for DCC and they are closely linked to lots of partners in the area. She mentioned that this was a very fast-moving area.

There have been funding announcements around retro fitting of homes these are for homes in private ownership the funding pot is around £2bn. There is also funding available for public sector for things like swimming pools and libraries etc. A small pot of funding for social housing was also announced. There is Clean Growth Fund which is aimed at the private sector for innovation. The Green Jobs Challenge is largely aimed at the Voluntary and Community Sector. With all these funds we don't have much detail yet and are awaiting more announcements on how this funding will be implemented, she expects it will be primarily through the LEP's and not direct access. Still waiting for more detail on the Shared Prosperity Fund. The overall issue from Low Carbon team point of view is the lack of scale and speed from Government direction especially to retro fit.

As a Council we are reducing Council's own emissions through decarbonising buildings through operations. Plan is to be Carbon neutral by 2050. There are currently 111 and rising projects planned to deal with decarbonisation. Currently supporting businesses through BEEP project which has been very successful to develop heat clusters for small businesses, there are lots of projects on infrastructure and low carbon infrastructure and quite a lot of work has been done around Lobbying.

Current position aligns well with what Government have announced and we have built up a good picture so need to build on that.

## **Questions/comments**

It was asked if the benefits are around retrofit of housing then what are the skills requirements are, we going to need to make businesses ready to take up opportunities, do we need to create supply for that demand. HG felt that skills are existing trades such as

building and roofing etc. To enable SME's in County Durham to get contracts with private household what the Government are saying is that they will fund up to 1/3 of the cost of retro fit. Good quality retro-fit costs around 10-15K so households could claim 5K, therefore it's about spreading the knowledge of the scheme to households. There is demand but we need to get supply chain opened quickly as Government want money spent within two years.

JG mentioned that he had a masters student working on 'what Durham has to do to try and meet the Climate emergency' over the past 9 months he was embedded in Council. The dissertation is nearly ready and will share this with everyone once it is complete. This will support initiatives to meet the net zero target.

#### 4. NECA & NELEP Strategies

VT presented to the Board.

He introduced himself and mentioned he works for Sunderland City Council and NECA working across region with 7 Local Authority area on Covid Economic Response and Covid Recovery they have put together set of immediate actions put together for business side and for skills.

As soon as starting emergency response process you should be looking at recovery process as well.

Did scenario planning in April and the longer lockdown went on impacts for businesses would be more significant and knew redundancies would rise quite rapidly

Social distance – Constraints on businesses whatever the new normal would be the longer lockdown went on the more damage would be done. Another lockdown could cause permanent damage or scaring to the regional economy.

Are there opportunities for building back better? Putting together a framework for recovery for the North East and having that ready and beginning the dialog with Government about that so that the resources can follow and be deployed in the way we feel needs to happen.

He discussed the Draft Recovery & Renewal Deal; this is a plan will change as announcements are made.

He discussed the local impacts of the crisis so far:

- Footfall is down
- 97% of business have been impacted by Covid with 35% worried about potential closure
- People may have to start working more from home and paying more for things such as broadband
- Threat of people on furlough becoming unemployed
- There may be more young people entering the labour market that has just collapsed can be damaging
- Skills base is an issue

Need to diversify in some areas, there are great areas of opportunity coming up with things like low carbon and offshore energy, digital and other areas such as health and pharmaceutical.

Brexit in January gives a set of challenges. There will be changes in the rural landscape going forward with Brexit and Covid with subsidies being removed going forward.

Emerging Recovery Package themes that form basis for the package:

- Job Recovery
- Future Economy
- Supporting Businesses
- Community and Place

- Digital & Transport

Summary of what we need to put in front of Government for recovery and renewal deal. Not just about getting people into jobs its about boosting jobs. We need to be move to future economy with greener and digital as key.

We need to be making sure we have shovel ready schemes available that can be ready within 18 months then if Government make announcements, we can then be ready for it.

### **Questions/comments**

RB - Have seen the full document and being asked questions from businesses about access to markets and growth. Earlier version of this were questions about exports etc. what does this mean for freeport?

VT – Best thing we can get is good free trade deal with EU. Freeport is not a replacement for that but maybe advantageous for region. The priority as a region we need to argue that the Government needs to get a good deal. Need economical rational for developing better trade.

TG – Leaders have asked us to come up with Performance dashboard for economic recovery and have developed something but keep getting asked the question of ‘what does success look like’. Are we aiming to recover to pre covid levels? Do we regionally have some sort of projections?

VT – In presentation have the baseline for what we would like to do and have set out where the region needs to be. This won’t be like it was before initially. There are big sectors of industry that become uncompetitive and won’t survive. Possibly to rebuild but needs balance some sectors may take years.

SP – This response to Covid has come up on us quickly as part of larger trajectory which is a bigger issue for all of us which was there before covid climate change agenda and I know you mentioned in discussion building back better and greener I wonder if there are ways of thinking about framing this which give response to two crisis and not just one?

VT – Green matters so much. Building back to a better and greener place will look to see what can be highlighted in that and what can be included

GM – Appreciate that this plan has come about because of Covid emergency and most measures are short to medium term is there a feel at regional level as to how fits other framework of strategies. The PM hasn’t committed to the Industrial Strategy how does this fit in that framework and what might come from Government in the longer term?

VT – Shouldn’t be separate to SEP and LIS this plan is constantly looking back at the SEP and LIS and seeing what is in there that would fit into this plan.

Have reassurance that the work done on LIS should be incorporated may need to refresh the SEP or LIS at some point. Have done some work with NECA Colleagues to see what the South of the Tyne area about and it is a productive part of the North East. Need to take forward longer term things within the recovery plan take us back to SEP and LIS going forward to get the North East to where it needs to be

SH reminded VT that from a partnership perspective can contribute and would like to contribute to the development of both plans at a wider level as well as NECA level so if there is anything please keep in touch

## **5. Update from Business, Economy, Regeneration & Strategy Recovery Groups**

### Comms – Sarah Slaven

A small group got together and meet every Thursday to look at coordinating comms. The group has mainly reps from Visit County Durham, Business Durham and Durham County Council but comms reps from partners are very welcome to join or feed into this meeting please let SS know. Looked at so far is to build up a timeline matrix trying to plot out what is likely to be happening between now and the end of the year in terms of announcements, key points in terms of furlough tapering off and to try and plan messages and good news stories that we might want to be putting out. It's in working progress at the moment but is something we would like to share with partners once complete. This will then be built into the recovery plan meant to be us as partners contributing to that. Idea of matrix is to have a more coordinated approach to what we as County Durham Partners put out in terms of messaging maybe making sure we are coordinated.

Key asks are if anyone has comms person within their organisation that they would like to loop into that please let me know. Also been doing work around key messages for recovery for County Durham that is almost ready to be shared with partners so will share this information. Tried to suggest link in the County Durham Vision and emphasis strengths of County Durham and its partners and organisations here. Feedback would be much appreciated.

We have a press release in development which will feature new Chair and how we will lead our recovery plans for County Durham through our existing Partnership.

### Business Support – Sarah Slaven

We have had one meeting of the Business Support Workstream which was a scoping meeting. Been looking at what already doing, what else is needed what else can we do through existing programmes and resources, what are the quick wins and where do we need more resources or flexibility to be able to do things. After our first meeting we had some initial actions which we are progressing. Want to pull together into one place the totality of the offer. Want to have something the shows the whole offer that Includes growth hub, local partners and through other regional partners, working progress to pull this together. There is an action to understand the regional offer and fact we know there will be extra funding coming through the NELEP e.g. is £10m kickstart tourism that was announced, even though we know the arrangements are not yet in place for businesses to access that its money that is coming through the ERDF national reserve pot, there will also be money for other sectors as well as Tourism.

There is action that is nearly complete for collating the redundancies support offer that we have in the County. There is big concern seeing rising number in redundancies, are we all clear what the offer is in the County and have we got enough capacity through that.

Piece of work to collate the start up offer, already seeing rise in number of start up enquiries and expect to see a lot more of that moving forward so have we got right offer.

As Business Support Workstream – identified in phase 1 about ensuring businesses have got information and support enabling them to restart, providing information and support to businesses and sectors most effected, making sure people facing redundancy have got access to support and businesses can refer their staff and increase confidence amongst businesses and consumers most of this work is underway. Moving into Phase 2 ensure County Durham Businesses have support they need to recover and retain jobs, how do we support businesses to adapt to take advantage of new opportunities, support those looking to start a business due to redundancy or change in circumstance and continue to increase confidence. Medium to long term recovery – taking advantage of the County's innovation

assets to support new economic growth and how building back better and greener can be translated into growth in the economy.

Have another meeting on Monday morning to have another look at this. Initially we said Business Support Workstream would look at the supply and demand side in terms of what businesses need and the employment and skills aspect. We now proposing we have a separate workstream to look at the actions on the Employment and Skills side. Suggest that Graham Wood and Linda Bailey hold a group around the Employment and Skills side and Business Support Workstream will still meet and then we will bring back together the BES Working Group to make sure we are joined up. Would like to make that recommendation to the Partnership.

#### Lobbying – Ray Brewis

The Lobbying plan we have drawn a flow chart put a little note about what Lobbying is about which essentially means is we need a plan to Lobby from. The ideas and the notions we need to do, and this has already been identified in the Workstreams the likely process that will follow leading to effectively key messages and key issues and things that are important to us. The Lobbying Plan can be built along side the overall plan as it goes forward its essentially how we get the comms messages out in the way we want and to the right people at the right time to hopefully be able to influence people who make the decisions that will help us down the line.

#### Infrastructure – Ray Brewis

What we have in pipeline is 273 projects, most of which are capital infrastructure with a few revenue projects in there. There are a range of partners projects but vast majority of Durham County Council projects and that is to do with the fact that the original source for the list was originally a County Council internal list. The majority of these are short term projects, projects that are in development. There is a huge lack across the County of long-term infrastructure conversation. Do need to keep developing and adding to the list.

Have broken list down into what we think infrastructure might be so there are strategic employment sites, access to markets, resilience & inclusive growth, reimaging the high street, bridging the digital divide and embedding sustainable transport. We need to decide which of these are our priorities and which ones will deliver the benefits that we want from the activities that we want, and which ones are likely to be successful and what capital projects the Government want to fund. Just heard that the Autumn Statement is likely to have capital investment for offshore wind in it as a feature. In order to prioritise project list, we have broken them down to where the benefits are and ranked them as to where the benefits are likely to be. There isn't a lot on retail and isn't a lot that actively looks to supporting the visitor economy we still would welcome, something to help fill those gaps. The next steps are to find what those gaps would be and to develop the projects as we see those priorities coming through.

#### Intelligence – Glenn Martin

Have had two workstream meetings have been having discussion around stats and what is available. Some of the trends we are seeing is consistent with what we expected there are also gaps and some of the data is out of date. Have been looking at the Visit Co Durham and Visit Durham surveys which are very inciteful into what is happening in County Durham rather than just relying on national trends. Bringing this together there have also been meetings of the Local Resilience Forum which started just after the crisis started include police, ambulance and fire services and they are working on a framework for collecting information and one of the 3 strands of that work is focussing on Business and the Economy and there is questions now as to whether they need to continue taking about Business and the Economy in that Forum because their focus is really on Health and Community and Welfare issues. So they been looking at Economy as a separate issue within Durham County Council as well they have been trying to tie those two discussions together as there are lots of overlaps and so within the County Council there is a framework being developed

to collect and establish what data is most useful. Within those forums and the Economic Partnership Workstreams we have concluded that we need to frame the data collection around some questions and asks and some way forward. Looking at bringing these together and using a joint framework rather than duplicating effort so will keep people informed as the process develops.

## **6. Updates from Board members**

JG – Durham Uni is expecting big financial hit in relation to Covid. Estimate of 100m over next 12 months or so. Adjustments have been made to deal with the situation.

The main impact is the expectation for the number of students who will be in the City of Durham is around 30% mark with expectation that there will be more home students proportionally than there will be oversea students. Until October comes, we won't really know what the situation is but are working on the basis of around between 25-30% across the board slightly lower for the overseas.

One of the fastest Universities to close and send students home the same true from staff nearly everyone is working from home now with a couple of essential staff on site. For the reopening we are looking at everything going online, and this will certainly be for the first term coming academic year with possibility of this going on for longer. In relation to students on site, there will be social distancing lecture theatres will only hold around 15% of normal case. So, will be having a much longer day as lectures may need to be repeated throughout the day to reach everyone.

Work going on with energy in local area is going very well. Mine Water heating and other projects which are already in progress. Have very successful largely local heat hub which has attracted 80-90 people including lots of SMEs and supply chain members should we manage to develop the heat system. National level – I wrote to chancellor with former local MP Helen Goodman at beginning of month saying heating bill for UK is met entirely with fossil fuels and mentioned who to decarbonise it and this not being considered in the Industrial Strategy copied in 6 local MPs, 3 whom have been in touch so that is going well.

DF – Transport – Government have announced that everyone can start using public transport straight away. Not sure what this means for 2m rule for bus companies. How will this affect getting students to school and college. Had a meeting with NEEC who were going to escalate this to see if they can get a response as to how buses intend to run this. So, while they have made the announcement of using transport, they haven't given any detail behind what that will mean.

College will open on 7<sup>th</sup> Sept and will be a model on flip learning. All students will come in, but they may be doing more digital and remote learning, will see how this goes and depending on Government Guidelines. They have welcome week for two weeks prior to this.

## **7. Any Other Business**

SH asked if Friday afternoons were the best time for these meetings? If anyone would like this to change, we could look at alternatives if people requested – Next meeting is in for 6<sup>th</sup> November

SH thanked HG, SS, RB, GM and VT for work done and updates given today. Will get out top 3 actions and if you could let us know if we have got this right or wrong let us know.

**8. Date and Time of next meeting – Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 1pm**