



County Durham
Economic Partnership

MINUTES

Meeting	County Durham Economic Partnership Board
Date of Meeting	Monday 30 April 2012
Time of Meeting	13.00 – 16.00
Venue	Committee Room 1B, County Hall

Attendees:

Ken Jarrold	Chair
Tarryn Lloyd Payne	DCC, Principal Strategy & Partnerships Officer
Angela Brown	DCC, Partnership Support Officer
CLlr Eddie Tomlinson	Chair of Rural Working Group
CLlr Neil Foster	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration
Stewart Watkins	Business Durham
Paul Chapman	Jobcentre Plus
Stuart Thompson	Federation of Small Businesses
Jonathan Walker	North East Chamber of Commerce
Brian Manning	Esh Group/Chair of Employment and Skills Group
Melanie Sensicle	Visit County Durham
Sue Parkinson	Chair of the Business and Enterprise Working Group
Sarah Robson	Chair of Place Shaping Working Group
Ian Thompson	Director of Regeneration and Economic Development
Nick Whitton	Cultural Partnership representative
Graham Wood	Economic Regeneration Manager
Andy Palmer	DCC, Strategy, Programmes & Performance
Barbara Gubbins	County Durham Community Foundation
Adrian White	Durham County Council, Head of Transport

Guest Speaker

Brian Dormand/Colum Smith Business Coaching for Growth

1. Welcome

Ken Jarrold welcomed everyone to meeting.

2. Apologies

John Widdowson	Chair of the Employment and Skills Executive Group
Ray Hudson	Durham University
Ivor Stoliday	Visit Durham

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Attendees – Barbara Gubbins County Durham Community Federation not County Durham Federation

Page 5 – Place Shaping Porters Review should be Portas Review

Page 6 – Tourism – 5th bullet point – the economic impact of Tourism was £659m and not £259m and the figures are recorded regionally and not nationally.

Page 6 – Tourism – 6th bullet point - ANE website and not ONE website

The rest of the minutes were **agreed** as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

Page 4 Item 10 Autumn Statement – Private Sector Report Sarah Robson informed the Board that she had met with Brian Manning and will be giving regular updates and feedback to the Chamber of Commerce and other business representative bodies.

Ken Jarrold asked Brian Manning if he was content with the outcome of discussion, his reply was that he supported increased dialogue with business but time would tell in regard to positive results. Brian also commented that it was important we understand how all the working groups linked together and that we were not duplicating work areas. Brian also suggested that we consider the number of groups involved in coordinating a business response.

Sue Parkinson suggested that across the Working Groups there already is some excellent examples of working together and supported continued linking together to stop duplication. However, Sue was unsure if this should translate into fewer groups.

Ian Thompson mentioned the Durham County Council Stock Options appraisal as an example of current dialogue with partners and a good example of best practice in terms of working towards new business led delivery models. Brian Manning mentioned the Northumberland Arch project as an example of best practice in this area.

Action:

Northumberland Arch and other examples of good practice will be examined

4. Chairs Remarks

Ken Jarrold made the following remarks:

The economic situation both nationally and internationally remains extremely worrying for school leavers, welfare recipients and the vulnerable. However, despite this some small local firms are trying hard to succeed and demonstrating entrepreneurial spirit in these difficult times. Ken reported on a recent visit to a local enterprise of which the business owner was extremely complimentary about Durham & Chester-Le-Street Enterprise Agency and the support which they have received from them.

Ken welcomed positive news in the form of the NEFRAN announcement on the Rural Growth Pilot being approved as part of a national scheme.

Further congratulations were also offered to Prof. Brian Tanner from Durham University, who has received the Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion.

Stuart Thompson commented on the Chairs remarks by emphasising local positive messages from Chamber members, which despite national headlines are more optimistic than at any point in recent times. This was supported by Jonathan Walker who mentioned the recent positive findings from the NECC business barometer.

Ken said that his preferred mindset was well founded optimism and he welcomed reasons for being optimistic.

5. LEP and Growing Places

Ian Thompson provided an update:

Edward Twiddy has been appointed as director of NELEP; he was Head of Local Government at HM Treasury.

The Growing Places fund meeting will take place on 11th May, there are 26 proposals worth £50 million to be looked at by the LEP panel; this will be the first time that investment will be allocated by the LEP.

Regional Growth Fund – Round 3 is now open and £1bn is available for this round. Completed application forms and supported documentation must be submitted before closing date of 13th June. Sue Parkinson mentioned that the BEWG are developing a bid on behalf of the CDEP.

Cllr Neil Foster mentioned that the LEP will soon be making decision about the Enterprise Zones plan for proposed sites.

6. Employment Report

Paul Chapman presented a report and highlighted some key messages:-

- The need to maximise opportunity.
- An excellent mentoring support service exists (New Enterprise Allowance) and Paul would like to work through the B&EWG to support increased access to the service, including reduced attrition rates and examination of the evidence base for potentially increasing eligibility.
- Partners were also reminded that the total vacancies available are only approx 30% of all available vacancies with companies putting adverts directly onto their websites.
- JSA is to move online, with additional partner opportunities through the "Monster" website. A future discussion with partners involved in compiling the report has been arranged to discuss how this additional intelligence can be incorporated.
- Work Programme colleagues would present a performance update in July

Action:

B&EWG to examine increased support for New Enterprise Allowance

Ken Jarrold thanked Paul and welcomed the report as excellent best practice.

7. Employability & Apprenticeships

Graham Wood updated the Board on the apprenticeship programme. There were :-

- 180 expressions of interest
- 62 live vacancies (businesses which are in the process of recruiting)
- 75 apprenticeships have already commenced

Work is also currently underway with Jobcentre Plus and other providers to better coordinate a single business offer. AAP's are also being approached to hopefully contribute further funding for companies that have not received apprenticeships in the last 3 years

Action:

Graham Wood will report back to the next Board meeting with the number of companies who have been successful.

8. Welfare Reform

Andy Palmer updated the Board on progress on the anticipated impact of Welfare Reform. The Government wants to reduce the £56bn spent on welfare reform. The April budget indicated £11bn savings, but early indications are this number is set to rise.

Combined with these savings is a comprehensive reorganisation of welfare support programmes with the introduction of Universal Credit to replace many of the traditional benefit payments; Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit (HB), Income Support (IS), Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA). Universal Credit (UC) will replace new claims beginning in October 2013 with migration to UC by October 2017.

The analysis suggests that £809.1m is spent annually in County Durham on benefits, that in turn equates to approximately payments of over £2m a day (£2.4m), with a consequential risk of loss of money to the local economy through direct expenditure and the local multiplier effect.

Further discussion was held on the actions being put in place as a consequence of the above information. A key lead in this is the Housing Welfare Reform group that has been meeting for over a year. Actions being taken forward include; Communication with tenants and perspective tenants who will be affected by the proposals, staff training, review of the Durham Key Options lettings policy, various payment support initiatives and analysis of the areas worst affected and consideration on the impact on the economy and other service areas across the County.

Members of the board commented that it was important to ensure any action plans developed reflected actual actions and not aspirational thinking.

Ken Jarrold said that the Partnership would be realistic and see the world as it is while doing everything possible to assist those affected by the changes

Action:

Andy Palmer will present an analysis of the impact Welfare Reform is having on the Economy at the next Board Meeting.

9. Lumiere Evaluation

Nick Whitton presented a report to the Group on the evaluation of Lumiere. The report was to inform the Board of evaluation work which was undertaken on 2011 Lumiere programme.

Positive points included:-

- Excellent media coverage.
- The effect on businesses was positive as most people reported that sales were up during Lumiere.
- 1/3 of businesses were geared up to do something in addition to their usual business.
- It raised the profile of Durham.
- Generated Tourist Interest.

DCC are asking for businesses to support the future of Lumiere festival and CDEP are asked to consider how this could be supported.

Cllr Neil foster commented that Lumiere 2011 was four fantastic nights and DCC had delivered on that.

Action:

A decision will be made at cabinet in July as to whether DCC will host the event again in 2013. All members were asked to reflect on how they might support future proposals

10. Appointment of CDEP Board Chair

Sue Parkinson informed the Board that adverts had gone out through every possible channel. There have been some expressions of interest and this will be reviewed after the closing date on Friday 11th May 2012.

11. County Durham Town MasterPlans

Sarah Robson provided an update on DCC's plans in relation to recent Masterplans for Seaham & Murton, Crook & Bishop Auckland.

A Link had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

12. Regeneration Statement

Andy Palmer informed the Board that work is in progress on refreshing the Regeneration Statement. There is 3 months work to be completed and key actions need updating which Maria Antoniou is currently working on at present.

Andy welcomed partner's views over the coming two months before the Regeneration Statement is brought to the next CDEP Board meeting for agreement.

Action:

Andy Palmer is to bring final document to the next Board Meeting for discussion.

13. EU Funding 2014 - 2020

Andy Palmer gave a presentation to the Board on EU Structural Fund Proposals which included:-

- Proposals 2014 - 2020
- UK Lobbying
- Challenges
- Moving Forward

It was agreed that any proposed development of "Investment Plans" would be done through existing partnership arrangements and agreed strategies.

Action:

A copy of the presentation will be circulated with the minutes.

14. Business, Enterprise & Skills Strategy

Graham Wood spoke to the Board about Business, Enterprise & Skills Strategy and welcomed comments from Board members before the end of May.

Brian Manning suggested that the implementation plans referenced at the end of the documents are not the correct words and it should be a 'wish list' as they are actions we wish to deliver as we are along way from being able to implement some of these actions. His concerns would be about how we are going to deliver it and if it can be delivered at all.

Sue Parkinson agreed that the delivery is more challenging but it is what we are doing through the working groups and not just a wish list of activity.

Ken Jarrold agreed that plans are not reality they are an essential guide to delivery. Ken emphasised the Partnership's strong commitment to action.

15. Business Coaching for Growth

Ken Jarrold gave a warm welcome to Brian Dormand who is the Managing Director of Winning Pitch. Brian made a presentation on the development of Business Coaching for Growth.

Stewart Watkins offered Business Durham's continued support of this project.

Action:

Copy of the presentation will be circulated with the minutes.

16. Transport Working Group

Andy Palmer presented a paper on Transport Working Group and spoke to the Board about why it was important to have a Transport Forum.

Action:

The Board agreed option 2 as the preferred option which would be a Transport Executive Group chaired by Adrian White and supported by a Transport Stakeholders Forum. The arrangements would be reviewed after one year.

17. County Statistical Bias

Andy Palmer presented a paper to the Board.

Stuart Thompson thought that the recommendations were unrealistic and dangerous, as it looks as though we just want more funding based on previous Local Authority Boundaries despite the LGR process that the County chose to implement.

Andy Palmer pointed out that the appeal for continued use of district level data is to influence future considerations of how the government may choose to allocate any area based grants (although none are available at the moment). Therefore, until a better form of statistical information is available the government will be lobbied to continue to collect district level data.

18. Working Group Chairs Update

Business and Enterprise

- The group has now appointed Sarah Slaven as a new Vice Chair for the group to support the Chair, Sue Parkinson.
- RGF round 3 - A bid is now being prepared for submission.
- NESTA Visit – Sue informed the Board that Ken Jarrold wrote to Dr Robert Crawford inviting him to visit Co Durham and they visited NETPark – PETEC and Kromek. He visited for half day and received various presentations and information on the Partnership and Innovation Framework. Feedback from Dr Crawford was very positive and he has said that he would like to work more with Durham in the future..

Joint Skills Working Group

- A joint meeting was held between the two Employment & Skills Groups and LEP in March.
- Andrew Hodgson gave a presentation to Group and informed the Partners of the LEP's proposals, role and what they can offer. Andrew offered his support and guidance to anyone thinking of making any bids for funding for employment and skills in Durham.

Place Shaping

The Place Shaping Group will meet over next few weeks and will be discussing the following:

- Affordable Housing
- Tourism Management Plan
- Durham City Delivery Plan

Housing

- Areas of continuing discussion by the Forum include Durham Key Options & Housing Strategy Investment Plan
- Steve Hicks to give a presentation on Gen2Genie which offers an alternative investment opportunity.

Rural

- The Rural Group met in March and discussed the Digital Durham Project which will try to get rural areas on the map and the Area Tourism Management Plan
- The Group are currently bidding for £3million from DEFRA
- The next meeting will be held in May and an item on the Agenda will be the LEADER project and how to address the slow management of the project from central government.

Tourism

- The Tourist Management Plan has now been through all levels and is on the way to the DCC Cabinet
- Stuart Thompson asked Melanie what was happening with the Cultural Destination Plan – Melanie is hoping that it would have been published but it has been delayed with the University. 9th May is still deadline for this.

Culture

- Lumiere – as already discussed by the board and further work was underway to commission other activities.
- The Cultural Partnership received a presentation from the B&EWG to understand the links across each other's remits.

.

19. Date and Time of next meeting

30th July, 1pm, Committee room 1b, County Hall

Future meetings

29th October, 1pm, Committee room 1b, County Hall