



County Durham  
Economic Partnership

## MINUTES

<b>Meeting</b>	County Durham Economic Partnership Board
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2013
<b>Time</b>	14.00 - 16.00
<b>Venue</b>	Deane Room, Palace Green Library, Durham City

### Attendees:

Brian Tanner	Chair
Jack Richardson	Jobcentre Plus
Sue Parkinson	Chair of the Business, Enterprise & Skills Group
Ray Hudson	Durham University
Simon Hanson	FSB
Ruth Robson	Durham Uni
Keith Bartlett	Lindisfarne Gospels Director
Cllr Eddie Tomlinson	Chair of Rural Working Group
Stewart Watkins	Business Durham
Ian Thompson	Director of Regeneration and Economic Development
Sarah Robson	Chair of Housing Forum
Andy Palmer	DCC, Strategy, Programmes & Performance
Melanie Sensicle	Visit Durham
Stephen Howell	Cultural Partnership
Heather Orton	DCC, Strategy & Partnership Team Lead
Tarryn Lloyd Payne	DCC, Principal Strategy & Partnerships Officer
Angela Brown	DCC, Partnership Support Officer

### 1. Welcome

Brian Tanner welcomed everyone to the meeting and initiated round the table introductions.

### 2. Apologies

John Widdowson	New College Durham
Brian Manning	Esh Group
Barbara Gubbins	County Durham Community Foundation
Geraldine Wilcox	Derwentside Homes
Christine Yule	Durham Business Group
Adrian White	DCC Head of Transport
Cllr Neil Foster	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were **agreed** as a true record.

### **4. Matters Arising**

Item 9: EU Structural Fund – AP to develop CDEP Investment Plan approach in line with wider investment plan opportunities in the region – This is in hand and will be picked up at a future meeting.

Item 10: Job Centre Plus to work through the Business, Enterprise & Skills Working Group to identify any further opportunities for maximising available resources within the JCP – On future Agenda for the BES Working Group.

Item 12: The formation of the BES – This action is complete.

Sue Parkinson mentioned that the minutes mentioned Lord Heseltine's Review how to work better with the LEP – SP felt more work needs to be carried out to build up this relationship.

### **5. Chairs Remarks**

Economic news over the last period has not been brilliant for the UK. Short/Medium outlook has deteriorated by 1% fall GDP since 2012. The Economic position of 2008 will not be reached until 2014. The Autumn statement made it clear that more Public Sector reductions are to come. Other announcements included:

- £5b infrastructure is planned for schools and roads, which mean the Western Bypass may secure funding.
- Round 4 of the Regional Growth Fund is now open
- Employment is looking good and has risen, so the number of people in work has gone up this is contradictory to GDP.

Small businesses are more optimistic 'bouncing along the level is about all that is happening.'

In light of the need to refocus the function of the Partnership, the attached paper has been circulated outlining a process to establish re-examining the function and form for the partnership. There will be a focus on the partnership and where it can add value. There will also be a refresh of the Altogether Wealthier Delivery Plan.

A Task and Finish Group will be established which will consist of Brian Tanner, Working Group Chairs and the secretariat. There will be workshops with wider members to support the process as appropriate.

Recommendations were for the CDEP to agree the proposals. Everyone was in support, therefore this was endorsed.

**Action: Secretariat to progress**

### **6. Visitor Economy & Place Marketing**

Melanie Sensicle gave an update on visitor Economy and Place Marketing

Challenges

- Supporting destination events
- Improving visitor quality in line with increased spend
- Improving public realm to lengthen stay through improved infrastructure, joined up busses, litter and local community
- Rural visitor animation – sporting opportunities, rural funding
- Promotion – Use of Co Durham toolkit in collective communication

## 7. Lindisfarne Gospels

Keith Bartlett spoke to the Board about the Lindisfarne Gospels and covered the following areas:-

- Optimise the potential of Durham City
- Step Change in visitor experience
- Develop local distinctiveness
- Grow the profile
- Manage and maintain public realm
- Legacy
- Lessons – A one team approach will deliver the project to help provide a clear picture for the future.

### Discussion Items 6 & 7

Brian opened the discussion. Ruth Robson emphasised that working in Partnership was the mainstay to delivering these kinds of wider event programme, as without the partnership the project would not be happening. The Cathedral is making huge strides forward to mount world class exhibitions. Ray Hudson mentioned that the University was working with others but wanted to know how to join up this activity with world heritage sites to form a network. He also suggested that instead of aiming to get people to stay in Durham 48 hours partners should be trying to get them to stay a week. As part of these discussions there was clear support for working with the University and Cathedral as they “learn” to widen approach to attracting all visitors.

Sue Parkinson felt that it was brilliant having major events like the Lindisfarne Gospels and felt there would be a lot of interest amongst small businesses in Durham and the available opportunities. She also felt that we shouldn't always assume that people know what the Lindisfarne Gospels are and therefore need to communicate with businesses in language that means something to them, so that they are aware of the impact it could have on their business. Brian asked about the available support for retailers in the area linked to the event. Keith informed him that the information was readily available and the first batch had gone out to people who initially expressed an interest. In terms of supporting the wider Lindisfarne Gospel event, Brian asked in terms of timing if there anything that the CDEP can directly support on. Keith mentioned that additional resources for supporting activities associated with the event would be more than welcome. This included training and sponsorship support.

Stewart Watkins felt that is a difficult ask of businesses at a difficult point in the economy. Messages to business needed to be clear on what was available in return and the level of investment required. This was further reflected in national sponsorship discussions.

Ruth Robson said that Durham needed to achieve a national profile to get established this would help with funding issues.

Jack Richardson informed the Board on the potential for maximising the JCP wage subsidy and work programme to support long term employment. Simon Hanson asked Keith if they had tried crowd funding and if FSB can help in anyway with this they will. Stewart Watkins asked how we could engage local businesses in the supply chain opportunities', Melanie suggested that the Cultural Durham Portal would provide some route to wider event contracts. Further discussion was also had on the potential for wider public sector commissions and procurement routes.

**Action:** Keith Bartlett, Melanie Sensicle and Jack Richardson to meet to discuss potential for collaboration on wage subsidy and work programme opportunities.

**Action:** Andy Palmer and Melanie Sensicle to discuss European funding opportunities

**Action:** Simon Hanson offered FSB communication routes to support messages to wider members. There was an assumption this offer would be replicated through other business membership organisations on the board. (NECC & Durham Business Club)

**Action:** Stephen Howell is to check current procurement procedures and opportunities' within cultural services to see if there are any exceptions for awarding contracts across cultural activities in Durham. (Not just DCC)

**Action:** BES Group to pick up strategic picture on event supply chains linked to major events and report through to a future board

**Action:** FSB to support on consideration of commercial opportunities' linked to perceived market opportunity for Durham City visitor attractions and providing a bus route between them. Melanie Sensicle to consider how this can be taken forward.

## **8. Cultural Partnership**

Stephen Howell gave an update in relation to the Cultural Partnership. The review of the Cultural partnership is underway which will re-exam how the partnership will structure itself to properly support the priorities.

The last meeting was cancelled due to weather. There is a plan to hold 2 workshops continuing what went on in the 'big tent event that launched the first stage'. The first workshop will try to put a framework together and look at governance issues and try to develop these.

## **9. Economic Review & LEP**

Ian Thompson gave an update. The Economic Review is now underway and is chaired by Lord Andrew Adonis. Partners will have been invited to a range of activities and events to support and consider the wider economic evidence base. There is an event to be held at the Baltic on the 15<sup>th</sup> Feb which will take attendees through the process and key themes emerging to date. Panel discussions will be held on the issues raised by those who prepared submissions to the review, and also think pieces on policy areas including the North East in a Global Economy, Land Markets, Transport & Infrastructure, Social Enterprise, North East Industrial Strengths and Innovation that have been commissioned to feed into this review.

A copy of the review was supposed to be complete for March. This may now be later, possibly early April. In response to Sue Parkinson's thoughts from matters arising, Ian suggested that consideration is given to engaging further with local LEP business representatives who sit on the Business Durham board. The objective is to improve communication in terms of how the local area chooses to respond to the NE Economic Review and the proposed challenges that are to be set for the "region".

## **10. Working Group Chairs Update**

### *Business Enterprise & Skills*

Sue Parkinson mentioned that the first meeting for the BES had taken place, it was very well attended. The Agenda has been split into 3 different sections:-

- Market Intelligence – Simon Hanson from FSB had given an update which was well received. Hoping to have update from NECC at the next meeting.
- Opportunities – Skill Funding Agency; and their 5 year business plan with crucial examination of gaps in delivery. The group is also continuing working with JCP and a commissioning approach to using discretionary funding.
- Influence – Tom Smyth from BIS gave a presentation to Group on the Industrial Strategy.

There is on-going delivery linked to the performance reward grant which is on the Creative Industries support programme and reports through the BES. Also the Rural Growth Network Programme – this is worth £1.5m and consists of activity in Gateshead North and Durham. With 52% of the programme to be delivered under the programme definition of “rural” in Durham. This was tendered by Northumberland County Council (accountable body) and has now been awarded.

#### *Rural*

Cllr Tomlinson mentioned that to compliment the Rural Growth Fund – Grant for small businesses is now open and businesses are being encouraged to apply with their project plans to see if they would be eligible for grant. January RWG meeting was postponed due to bad weather. Digital Durham is well on track. The BT contract has been tendered and let. How it can be delivered in rural areas needs further examination.

We plan to revisit the work programme – there are issues with affordable housing and how social landlords can deliver in rural areas. Craig Wilson is to attend the next meeting to give an update of the delivery of the destination management plan.

#### *Housing*

Sarah Robson informed the Board that at the last Housing Forum they had presentations from “Altogether Safer” and the antisocial behavioural team. The forums are undergoing a further examination of the action plan to see how cross service working can be enhanced.

Further work is to be done in relation to organised crime which will focus on the housing providers and working with tenants.

Standard items on the agenda are Welfare Reform especially in considerations of on-going actions to mitigate impact of Universal Credit and the new Social Fund.

HCA - gave an update on affordable housing programme. This focused on numbers dropped off Care and Support fund. Bids went in at the beginning of Jan. There has been strong support from the Partnership.

#### *Tourism*

Melanie Sensicle mentioned that The North East England Regional Tourism Awards had taken place last Thursday. Rockcliffe Hall won Business Tourism Award and Low Urpeth Farm in Chester-Le-Street was named Bed and Breakfast accommodation provider of the year. These will now go forward to the National Awards.

RGF2 – Visit England have worked with Durham on supporting a Durham Thematic Walking and Cycling Campaign to a total cost of £210,000 which was matched to help large and small businesses to develop strategies and market campaign. Next 15 months will see a significant marketing campaign as a result of the funding.

RGF4 – Visit England have put in another bid to focus on overseas visitors. This will potentially clash with other bids from the Heritage Cities Group. Visit Durham will look to make a decision as to whether it will go with Visit England or other bids as appropriate.

Other activities include; Welcome Durham launches tomorrow for 3 days. 15 people have signed up; Taste Durham celebrated two weeks ago and got a lot of press. The chef is very keen to do a food festival.

**11. Any Other Business**

Nothing to discuss

**12. Date and Time of next meeting**

13<sup>th</sup> May 2013, 1pm Location TBC

**13. Future meetings**

29<sup>th</sup> July 2013, 1pm Location TBC

4<sup>th</sup> November 2013, 1pm Location TBC