



County Durham
Economic Partnership

MINUTES

Meeting	County Durham Economic Partnership Board
Date of Meeting	Monday 4 th November 2013
Time	13.00 – 15.00
Venue	Committee Room 1B, County Hall

Attendees:

Brian Tanner	Chair
Donna Jefferson	County Durham Partnership, DCC
Jo Laverick	Durham Rural Community Council
Geraldine Wilcox	Derwentside Homes
Maria Antoniou	Spatial Policy, DCC
Cllr Eddie Tomlinson	Chair of Rural Working Group
David Usher	Spatial Policy, DCC
Edward Twiddy	North East Local Enterprise Partnership
Paul Robson	Jobcentre Plus
Sarah Robson	Chair of the Housing Forum
Sue Parkinson	Chair of the Business, Enterprise & Skills Group
Cllr Neil Foster	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration
Simon Goon	Business Durham
Ian Thompson	Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, Strategy, Programmes & Performance, DCC
Andy Palmer	North East Chamber of Commerce
Jonathan Walker	Strategy & Partnerships, DCC
Tarryn Lloyd Payne	Strategy & Partnerships, DCC
Angela Brown	Strategy & Partnerships, DCC

1. Welcome

Brian Tanner welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Christine Yule	Durham Business Group
Stephen Howell	Cultural Partnership
Melanie Sensicle	Visit County Durham Board
Jack Richardson	JCP
Simon Hanson	Federation of Small Businesses
Barbara Gubbins	County Durham Community Foundation
Ray Hudson	Durham University

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The actions were agreed as a true record

4. Matters Arising

- Sue Parkinson to meet with Stephen Howell Re: Event supply Chain – This meeting did take place and Stephen will be presenting back at the next Board Meeting.
- ESI draft & Opt in Prospectus were circulated to members of Board.
- Secretariat to progress CDEP Review – Implementation recommendations are underway and being actioned.

5. Chairs Update

Brian mentioned that the 'State of Co Durham' would be discussed in presentation from David Usher today.

Brian mentioned the Headline Stats for national economy:-

- Working Age Employment Rate (April 12 – March 13)
 - GB: 70.9% ↑ 0.2%
 - NE: 66.5% ↑ 0.3%
 - CD: 65.8% ↑ 0.7%

Across the board increases (though not significant) since last figures published December 12

- Worklessness (total out of work benefits) ↓ 2.1% on year (Feb 13) though in total ↑ 2.5% since pre-recession rate
- Long term unemployment (over 12 months) ↑ 10.8% on year (Feb 13) and ↑ 876% since pre-recession rate.
- Youth unemployment (JSA <24) ↓ 18.4% on year (Feb 13) however ↑ 43.6% in total since pre-recession rate

There are some good news indicators that the County is heading in the right direction:-

- Lindisfarne Gospels – attracted nearly 100,000 visitors from all over the world which should impact on the local economy. Brian felt this was an excellent example of partnership working
- Apprenticeships Programme – There have been 277 starts on the programme to date with over 342 employers engaged
- Starting to see real progress at Hitachi, with Shepherd being announced as the contractor.

CDEP Review

- Brian thanked board members who have given their time to date. As outlined in the paper to the previous board the review recommendations are now being implemented. Important to note that as we agreed there is not wholesale change but there is a renewed focus. A reminder of expected areas of interest to the board:
 - Development of new prospectus.
 - Development of x3 Core Working Groups
 - Business, Enterprise & Skills, Economic Infrastructure Working Group and the Durham City Board.

- Establishment of a Data Management Group –an initial scoping has taken place. Full scope and remit to be agreed when new group meets in in early Dec.
- Annual Conference – options being considered for event in April 2014.
- As a reminder the key focus we've agreed for the Board are:
 - **Making our places work** (economic infrastructure) and promotion of County Durham as a place to invest, do business and visit.
 - **Influencing and informing wider decision making** priorities and investments in particular the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) and North East Leadership Board (Combined Authority).
 - Enabling **effective investment planning** within the County – operating as a board overseeing and promoting a strategic pipeline of prioritised pre-prepared schemes and making the most of available resources.
 - Creating **more opportunities for employment** and reducing disparities, with a key current emphasis on opportunities for young people.

6. State of County Durham – David Usher

David Usher gave a presentation to the group in relation to 'The state of Co. Durham'

In relation to the estimated number of businesses (14,420), Sue Parkinson asked if this included businesses in the County that weren't VAT registered as there are very many of these. David Usher confirmed this ONS Data set only includes VAT registered and PAYE businesses.

Edward Twiddy felt that the North East has a bigger demographic problem in relation to higher valued jobs in particular. He felt that London is not a comparative competitive region. Therefore it may not be appropriate to put it into the statistics as once London has 'been stripped' out then the North East no longer looks like the 'poor relation' in relation to access to employment.

Brian thanked David for his presentation

7. Sustainable Community Strategy and Vitality Index – Donna Jefferson

The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is the overarching strategic plan for the County covering 20 years (2010 – 2030). As part of the development process a number of key issues have already been agreed by the County Durham Partnership. These were outlined within a paper circulated.

Donna gave an update to the Board in relation to High Level Objectives and the current feedback from the other thematic partnerships. Donna further underlined the focus on bringing together and encouraging people to tackle key issues. Key questions for the CDEP Board members to consider;

- How can the SCS steer across five partnerships?
- Where does SCS sit and where does it fit with the Co Durham Plan/5 Thematic Plans and locality plans?

- Does the Board agree with the high level objectives?
- What does Board agree are areas of cross cutting focus?
- Does the Board agree that the new approach will help the CDP to have bigger impact on outcomes?

Action: Brian felt that there should be a brief discussion on issues and any further comments should be fed back to Tarryn Lloyd Payne

Geraldine felt that in relation to high level objectives it is missing job creation and quality of jobs – should this be a standalone high level objective? Andy Palmer replied to this comment stating that one of Measurers of Success is the creation of 30,000 jobs.

The Relationship between CYPS in school and school leavers to help get young people into employment – crosscutting other areas is a further important issue.

Vitality Index

Donna further updated the Board on vitality index currently being developed. This project is being led through the Institute for Local Governance and an update on this will be given once information is available.

8. Opportunities for Investment & Growth: County Durham Plan – Maria Antoniou

Maria gave a presentation to the Board in relation to the County Durham Plan. The presentation outlined the key changes from preferred options which were:-

- The distribution of proposed housing development in Durham City has decreased from 15.5% to 13%
- Slight reduction in affordable housing requirements for South and West Durham (to 10% and 15% respectively)
- New North West Durham Green Belt
- 84 housing allocations, 64 existing and 20 new, 51 deleted
- G&T Study indicating no need for site allocation

Cllr Neil Foster mentioned the consultations have taken place and a great deal of work has been carried out to get to the stage where they are at now. There have been a lot of positive and honest comments.

Discussion focussed on what happens if things move on once the plan has been adopted? Maria said every stage gains more prominence. Sites that have been assessed don't have to wait until 2014, sites now have planning applications on them because of the plan. Once it is adopted then it will all be final.

Action: Brian asked if the Board were all in support of the plan – this was agreed.

9. Deciding European Investment Allocations – Sue Parkinson

Sue gave a presentation to the Board in relation to European Structural and Investment Fund Strategy

Cllr Neil Foster commented that in relation to National Opt Ins he was concerned how much delivery will be locally focused. He thought we need to see how much spend can be brought to the local area. There is a need to get involved in the detail. Unless Opt Ins are implemented at local level then it won't maximise benefit.

Brian asked if the Board wanted to make a joint partnership response, to which all agreed

Brian thanked everyone for all their hard work and support in relation to European Investment

Action: Secretariat to prepare and circulate for comments a CDEP response to the North East European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy

10. NELEP Investment Planning – Edward Twiddy

Edward gave an update in relation to the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) Investment Plan. The focus was on more and better jobs for the NELEP area.

Edward discussed the wider context for understanding priorities behind European spending and how that is affecting local discussions on spending profiles and agreeing local outputs. Immediate priorities for the NELEP are completion and agreement of the European Investment Strategy with national government. This is expected to happen by the end of January 2014.

Edward mentioned that he had not heard anything as of yet in relation to what the government thought of the initial draft from the NELEP but expected to hear more after 7th November.

In relation to the national programme Sue Parkinson reminded the Board that what does not get spent of the Transition Region allocation will be lost to the North East.

Therefore there is both a huge opportunity and challenge in getting money out of the door and invested locally. Brian agreed that this would very important point and

reemphasised the point to the board to understand the detail behind the NELEP investment proposals and the priorities for County Durham.

11. Partners and Working Group Chair updates

Rural group – Cllr Eddie Tomlinson

A lot of progress is being made in relation to the Rural Growth Network. The bid was approved but there have been changes in relation to the benefit for Co Durham.

- 11 Rural Economic Development Officers are now in post, 5 of these are operating across Co. Durham based in the Enterprise Agencies
- Hub Development - £750k has been made available for the development of further hubs with the Dale Centre, NeST and Old Castle Eden Brewery invited to submit full applications.

There was an update on the closing of the LEADER Programme

Cllr Tomlinson felt that it is good news that there is transitional money being made available.

Housing Forum – Sarah Robson

The last forum was themed on Altogether Greener. There were presentations on Warm up North and Durham Green – Collective Fuel Purchasing and also an update on the work of the Partnership in relation to Energy & Fuel Poverty.

HCA gave an update & Marie Smith discussed Welfare Reform and the impact its having on people.

- The demand for three bedroomed properties is beginning to fall as a consequence of the benefit cap.
- The total people in rent arrears dipped in July but have since gone up and we are now following the national trend.

The empty homes programme was discussed: this will see 130 units brought back into use.

The Forum is to meet again in two weeks, Sue Parkinson will be joining to present on European Investment.

Jo Laverick – VCS Update

Jo commented on the general state of the sector including;

- Recent push to offer incubation/skills to employees
- New outputs – Health/skills/volunteering/poverty – foodbanks/homelessness
- There have been cuts with reduction of staffing and resources.
- Working closely with partners in relation to EU pipeline work

A general comment concerned what the sector is trying to do in relation to lines of communication with few resources. Jo asked partners to consider how they put information into a language that people can understand. The added benefit of this is that people/partners can see what we are trying to achieve. The European proposals are a good example.

Barbara Gubbins and County Durham Foundation have secured £500,000 for the Learning Working Earning programme

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business

13. Date and Time of next meeting

24th February 2014 @ 1pm