



County Durham
Economic Partnership

MINUTES

Meeting	County Durham Economic Partnership Board
Date of Meeting	Tuesday 28th April 2015
Time	13.00 – 16.00
Venue	Hitachi, Merchant Park, Aycliffe Business Park

Attendees:

Brian Tanner	Chair
Simon Hanson	FSB
Cllr Eddie Tomlinson	Chair of Rural Working Group
Cllr Neil Foster	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Regeneration, DCC
Mike Allum	Spatial Policy, DCC
John Gluyas	Durham University
Tarryn Lloyd Payne	Strategy & Partnerships, DCC
Ian Thompson	Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, Strategy, Programmes & Performance, DCC
Andy Palmer	Derwentside Homes
Geraldine Kay	Job Centre Plus
Carol Daniell	Chair of the Housing Forum
Sarah Robson	Chair of the BES Group
Sue Parkinson	Merchant Developments
Geoff Hunton	Strategy & Partnerships, DCC
Angela Brown	

1. Merchant Park 1 and 2: Current Status and Future Growth – Geoff Hunton

Geoff welcomed the Board members to Merchant Park & the Hitachi Rail Vehicle Manufacturing facility and gave a presentation to the Board. He mentioned that in early 2009 work began for Merchant Place Developments and Merchant Park with the submission of the site in Newton Aycliffe for the planned Hitachi Rail Vehicle Manufacturing Facility which would deliver the next generation of high speed rail carriages to the UK and Europe. There are two sites, Merchant Park 1 & Merchant Park II. Work commenced on site in November 2013 when Shepherd were appointed as the contractors for the development. Hitachi will be fully operational from January 2016 with 750 staff on site with further jobs being created across the supply chain.

Action: AB to circulate presentation

2. & Hitachi Site Tour – Shepherd Construction

The Board members were given a guided tour of the Hitachi Site

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

4. Apologies

Simon Goon	Business Durham
Edward Twiddy	Atom Bank
Barbara Gubbins	County Durham Community Foundation
Neil Graham	Chair of Durham City Board
Jonathan Walker	NECC

5. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

6. Economic Update – Andy Palmer

AP presented an Economic update to the Board. Building on the context set by the tour of Hitachi the strength and ambition for the local economy was emphasised. In understanding how as an Economic Partnership we can measure our success & impact across future investments and partnership working, AP reiterated that the CDEP the agreed five measures of success which are:-

- Employment Rate
- GVA
- Numbers of Businesses
- Household Disposable Income
- Index Deprivation

The board received an update on the measures, which generally pointed towards a more optimistic economic picture. However, the board did discuss the nature of the recovery and concerns in regards of the emerging structure of the labour market. This is in particular reference to understanding the full and part time nature of employment and overall household income.

As part of the wider North East Combined Authority economic plan, there are 12 asks being discussed at the moment in terms of future Devolution proposals and how they could support our overall ambition for growth. AP reminded the Board that the CDEP & partners should have a strong influencing role in shaping and supporting the proposals.. AP also informed the Board that there will be a refresh of the Regeneration Statement to reflect the changing economic and political environment. This will ensure that the Durham position is clear and that partners are signed up to its support going forward.

Action: It was agreed that an Economic Update would be discussed at every other CDEP Board meeting.

7. County Durham Plan: Update and understanding impact – Mike Allum

Mike Allum gave a presentation to the Board updating them in relation to the County Durham Plan.

The plan was submitted on 25th April and Examination in Public held in October/November 2014

The inspector's Interim Report was received on 18th February 2015 with the following points:

- The vision for a successful local economy incorporates unrealistic assumptions about job growth
- The Strategic Economic Plan is 'evidently very ambitious'
- The objective assessment of housing needs is too high
- The spatial distribution is not justified, particularly for Durham City
- The process and evidence relating to the proposed amendments to the Green Belt boundary are flawed
- The proposed Western and Northern Relief Roads are not justified, deliverable or environmentally acceptable
- There are concerns about the content and soundness of policies in relation to House in Multiple Occupation and Student Accommodation

The preparation of the plan commenced in 2008 and during the 7 years the only objection that was received was from English Heritage. All of the other comments were positive and there were no fundamental issues.

BT reminded the Board members that the County Durham Plan was a County Council plan but produced in Partnership and he also reminded the Board that the CDEP had agreed to support the overall objectives of the plan. He asked if the Board were still happy with this approach to which the Board agreed. It was also suggested that Board members could draft letters of support to the Planning Inspector.

Action: AB to circulate presentation

8. EU Structural Funds: Update – Sue Parkinson

A presentation was received from SP to update on EU Structural Funds She reminded the Board members of the following

- The County Durham Transition Region Allocation is €156.7m and that the ERDF split is 64/36
- Estimated spend has been allocated against EU Thematic Objectives and areas of minimum allocations have been set at a national level
ERDF – minimum 20% low carbon
ESF – minimum 20% social inclusion
- Youth Employment Initiative, from the Cohesion Fund, a further €9m for County Durham only

SP mentioned that in relation to Governance arrangements she is the representative for CDEP on the ESIF Committee.

The first round for calls for the NELEP was launched at end of March. These calls focused on a number of themes to meet the need for funding in specific areas. Further calls will be launched in summer 2015 after the Operational Programme is approved.

AB to circulate presentation

9. Working Group Chairs Update

Rural, Cllr Eddie Tomlinson:

- The Rural Working Group met in April. Both LEADER programmes have now been approved, as North Pennines won their appeal. Still awaiting guidelines for programme, but the first call for projects is expected June/July 2015.
- The Rural Working Group held two seminars one at the Witham Barnard Castle and one at Greenhill's Centre at Wheatley Hill to promote the RDPE which is a £5m pot. It was indicated that 12 potential schemes have been received since holding the seminars.
- Cliff Duff gave an update to the group on Affordable Warmth Strategy.

Housing Forum, Geraldine Kay

- The Housing Forum have not met since the last CDEP Board meeting,
- A joint seminar took place with Public Health which was well attended.
- Housing have completed the largest Housing Stock Transfers to the Housing Group that has been created. They intend to build 700 houses in the first year.

10. Partners Update

Durham University – Jon Gluyas

- The University has now appointed Stuart Corbridge as Vice Chancellor (Stuart is from the London School of Economics)

11. Any Other Business

Nothing was raised

12. Date and Time of next meeting

Tuesday 14th July 2015 @ 1pm