



County Durham  
Economic Partnership

## MINUTES

<b>Meeting</b>	County Durham Economic Partnership Board
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday 14th July 2015
<b>Time</b>	13.00 – 16.00
<b>Venue</b>	Conference Room 4B, County Hall

### Attendees:

Brian Tanner  
Cllr Eddie Tomlinson  
Cllr Neil Foster

Jon Gluyas  
Tarryn Lloyd Payne  
Ian Thompson  
Andy Palmer  
Jason Livingston  
Sarah Robson  
Sue Parkinson  
Angela Brown  
Simon Goon  
Bill Fullen  
Alan Reiss  
Marie Smith  
Barbara Gubbins  
Lorraine O'Donnell

Chair  
Chair of Rural Working Group  
Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Development  
and Regeneration, DCC  
Durham University  
Strategy & Partnerships, DCC  
Director of Regeneration and Economic Development,  
Strategy, Programmes & Performance, DCC  
Job Centre Plus  
Chair of the Housing Forum  
Chair of the BES Group  
Strategy & Partnerships, DCC  
Business Durham  
County Durham Housing Group  
Office of Durham Police and Crime Commissioner  
Housing Project & Service Improvement, DCC  
County Durham Community Foundation  
Assistant Chief Executive, DCC

### 1. Welcome

BT welcomed everyone to the meeting

## 2. Apologies

Edward Twiddy	Atom Bank
Neil Graham	Chair of Durham City Board
Simon Hanson	FSB
Geraldine Kay	Derwentside Homes
Stephen Howell	Head of Sport & Leisure, DCC
Michelle Gorman	Visit County Durham

## 3. Minutes of the last meeting

The update on the Housing Forum from Geraldine Kay should be amended to read 700 new homes in the first ten years and not first year as stated. All other information was agreed as a true record

**Action: AB to correct the minutes**

## 4. Matters Arising

BT mentioned that we need to have an Economic Update to discuss at the next meeting

## 5. Anti-Poverty in County Durham – Lorraine O'Donnell

Lorraine O'Donnell and Marie Smith gave a presentation to the Board on responding to poverty in County Durham.

The Scope of poverty work:-

- Building on work in response to welfare reform and recognition of the wider issues facing residents
- Scope broadened to include a holistic view of issues
- Focus on preventative work to avoid households getting into financial difficulties
- Develop targeted interventions to support the poorest households in greatest need

They mentioned that there were more changes to come especially as £12bn less is to be spent on welfare over the next four years. With this in mind there was a need to share intelligence awareness. They are currently collecting data which is sensitive to share at the moment.

There is a need to join up more as it is important that we all understand the pressure of trends. This partnership has a responsibility for welfare reform and poverty; therefore we need to make sure we are helping people that struggle. LO thanked the Board for inviting her along.

### *Comments/Questions*

It was asked what pressures were on the minimum wage rising and the impact this will have on employers. The response was that it will have an impact as 1/3 of people in the welfare report were in employment.

It would be useful to have information of how many people are in poverty.

Capping benefits at £20,000 per household will impact on the workload of a lot of people particularly housing providers. We need to get intelligence out so that people are aware of this. SR mentioned that it will be discussed at the Housing Forum next week, as will the 1% reduction in Social Housing, as these will have a cumulative impact which is worrying. LO felt that the positive side to all this is that there is a 'real coming together' of agencies to try and deal with the issues.

BT asked if they knew what the household debt was across the County

BT thanked LO and MS for their presentation

### **Action LO agreed to send information on figures for household debt**

## **6. Job Centre Plus: Understanding & Supporting the County Durham Labour Market – Jason Livingston**

Jason Livingston gave a presentation to the group covering the following three areas:-

- Positive register impact
- New delivery approach
- Universal Credit

Positive Register Impact – There have been a lot of changes implemented over the last 12 months which have affected the Job Seekers Allowance Register. There are 7200 in County Durham. This did peak at one point to 12000. Those nearest to being employable move off the register first. Others have more barriers to get into employment so we have to adopt a different strategy to get these people into work.

New Delivery Approach – Additional resources to support younger people 18-24 and older customers. It has a positive impact on a way that people that are left on the register.

This is being mirrored for 25+ customers to have a work coach appointed; this will maintain some relationship even if benefits are changed. It will maintain a consistent approach from initial entitlement to employment over the next 3-6 months.

Universal Credit – This will be rolled out on 21<sup>st</sup> September only for new claimants that would have claimed JSA and single non home owners. This will accelerate quickly, like most changes it has positives and negatives. It will now be monthly payments as opposed to payments every fortnight. JCP is working closely with landlords who are aware of the challenges that they may face. On the positive side it will see the disappearance of 16+ under Universal Credit.

### Questions/Comments

What effect do the changes have on zero hours contracts? It gives the protection that people on zero hours contracts will still automatically receive universal credit.

Could this then encourage more employers to use zero hour contracts? We won't know the impact of this until it is rolled out.

It was asked if there will be issues for newly self-employed – JL mentioned that the first year someone is self-employed will be deemed as working. There is a

need to work on a system to notify if there are any different risks for people going into self-employment.

BT thanked JL for attending today

**Action: AB to circulate presentation**

**7. County Durham Housing Group – Bill Fullen**

BF thanked the Board for inviting him to come along and present.

He discussed the reasons for the housing stock transfer:-

- Self-financing gave limited ability to carry out new build and other aspirational work
- A two speed housing offer
- Other transfers in County Durham have attracted significant investment

The Transfer key elements are as follows:-

- Just under 18500 homes transferred
- Associated land and other assets
- Development land
- A group structure with over 400 employees
- £150m loan facility raised from the banks/institutions – fixed and variable

The transfer date was 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and covers Dale & Valley, East Durham and Durham City areas.

The County Durham Housing Group are working on a corporate plan and we need to ensure that we can add value by working in partnership with other organisations.

*Questions/Comments*

How do the Transfer arrangements affect the right to buy?– BF replied that as part of the transfer existing tenants have right to buy. New tenants after 3 years might have the right to buy so therefore impact should be fairly minimal.

The partnership has done a bit of work implementing the Social value Act, is there anything else we can do to maximise the supply chain? If there is let SP know.

It was asked there might be involvement with the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). BF mentioned that he had had a discussion with Graham Wood. They also have their own employability officer. It was mentioned that this should be a county wide discussion involving other providers for YEI.

**AB to circulate presentation**

**8. EU Structural Funds; Focus on Social Inclusion & Employability – Sue Parkinson**

SP gave an update to the Board on EU Structural Funds. She recapped that over the next seven years there is an allocation of €537.4m of European money available. As Durham is a transition region it has about €150 ring-fenced. She reminded the Board that the LEP had required us to sign up as a partnership in order to be eligible to be considered for investment of EU funds.

The CDEP has a leadership role and SP sits on the LEP ESIF committee as a representative.

We held a Social Inclusion Conference where around 200 people attended and this was very well received.

Each work stream lead is doing a lot of work with their individual groups:-

Social Inclusion – Jo Laverick

Employment & Skills – Graham Wood

Youth Employment Initiative – Linda Bailey

Access to Finance – Simon Hanson

Business Support – Sarah Slaven

Innovation – Catherine Johns

Low Carbon/Energy – Maggie Bosanquet

Claire Williams – Capital Infrastructure

We are now moving from position of pipeline development into delivery stage.

The ERDF Operational Programme has now been signed off and is available to download. This is not too different from the draft OP.

The first calls for ERDF and ESF have gone out despite there being no OP at the time.

The ESIF Committee meets to look at these calls. These are national calls with local elements to them. Calls will end late July.

The ESIF Committee have final Terms of Reference albeit still in draft format at the moment.

The governance arrangements are on local level but have the ESIF Committee advising the managing authority.

Calls will be coming out soon for Big Lottery matching and more information should be available by 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

There are calls out for ERDF which was an open call and needed match funding; this is oversubscribed. More calls are expected end of July.

## **9. CDEP Board Chair Appointment – Andy Palmer**

BT left the room and SP took over as chair for this item only.

SP asked the Board to consider the proposal in the report and the recommendations which are:-

- Set up a sub group with membership
- Undertake an appropriate evaluation exercise
- Report back to the Board with recommendation as to the chairs further term of office.

The Board agreed that this was a sensible approach to take.

It was agreed that the sub group would be SP, AP and another Volunteer – it was agreed to ask Simon Hanson from FSB

**Action: CDEP Secretariat to organise the meeting of the Sub Group**

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

*Housing Forum – Sarah Robson*

The Housing Forum met in May and will meet again next week. The Focus of the last meeting was on the general election and how we could respond to this as a partnership. Graham Wood gave a presentation on enhanced employability delivery. Marie Smith gave an update on Anti-Poverty. Performance was discussed. It was a standard agenda with good discussions around the general election and employability. We also had discussions about the Family Intervention Project and registered providers would like to sustain this.

There is a lot of good work going on at the moment especially around the sharing of intelligence.

*The Rural Working Group – Cllr Eddie Tomlinson*

The Rural Group met on 18<sup>th</sup> June there was a positive outcome resulting from a discussion through members' feedback. The group will be commencing a piece of work on Farming with NFU, DWP and Economic Development Team regarding poor conditions for hill farmers. It was discussed that a number of people that train through college for farming do not end up becoming farmers. A meeting was held with Andrew Robinson from DEFRA and discussions took place around right to buy in rural areas. The next meeting will be held in September and will be discussing the draft rural position statement.

## **11. Partners Update**

*Jon Gluyas – Durham University*

The appointment of the new Vice Chancellor Stuart Corbridge is now in place. Both JG and BT met with Stuart to explore his commitment to the local area; he gave every indication that he was totally committed.

*VCS – Barbara Gubbins*

At the last voluntary sector strategy group there was a presentation by Tony Chapman about sector groups in poorer areas that are suffering the most. Regional discussions with national funders and voluntary sector have taken place. Garfield Weston have put resources into funding for a three year post. Currently trying to develop joint initiative across the North East by holding all day workshops etc. One in Newcastle was successful so there is a need to speak to Council about this. National funders are looking for small groups that would not apply through Garfield but would apply through AAPs.

*Business Durham – Simon Goon*

Everything is going well. Enquiries for business space are up which is good. In relation to the Local Growth Fund we are now only one signature away. Innovation – Future Business Magnates (FBM) – is now in its tenth year. Durham Johnston School won overall with a product that glowed red if using too much water. The living laboratory - view to create a number of programmes and how this can be better connected as really there is no connectivity. This will be commissioned in autumn so will report back on this in due course.

**Action – SG will send link for FBM awards**

## **12. Any Other Business**

AP mentioned as the next Board meeting would see a strategic refresh of the regeneration statement setting out priorities for the year, it would be a good idea to put together an intelligence note and analysis. As this will take a couple of weeks to digest it will be circulated in advance of the next meeting

## **13. Date and Time of next meeting**

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015