



County Durham
Economic Partnership

MINUTES

Meeting	County Durham Economic Partnership Board
Date of Meeting	Tuesday 4 th July 2017
Time	13.00 – 15.00
Venue	Mill Hill Board Room, Business School, Durham University

Attendees:

Brian Tanner	Chair
Jon Gluyas	Durham University
Sarah Robson	Chair of Housing Forum
Simon Goon	Business Durham
Matthew Hudson	Business Durham
Simon Hanson	FSB
Sue Parkinson	Vice Chair & Chair of the Business, Enterprise & Skills Group
Gordon Elliott	Transformation & Partnerships, Durham County Council
Tarryn Lloyd Payne	Strategy & Partnerships, Durham County Council
Angela Brown	Strategy & Partnerships, Durham County Council
Stuart Corbridge	Durham University
Andrew Mitchell	North East Finance
Dawn Dunn	North East Finance

1. Welcome

BT welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular Stuart Corbridge, Vice Chancellor at Durham University, Andrew Mitchell and Dawn Dunn from North East Finance and Gordon Elliott Head of Transformation and Partnerships, DCC, who are all on the agenda to present today. BT also welcomed Matthew Hudson who attended with Business Durham today

BT informed the Board that we now have new elected members and Cllr Carl Marshall is now the Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration and Cllr Ossie Johnson is the Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Culture, Leisure and Rural Issues as we understand it Cllr Johnson will also Chair the Rural Working Group. They were both invited today's meeting but sent apologies as they were at a Local Government Association meeting.

2. Apologies

Alison Gittins	Durham Business Club
Arun Harish	CPI
Carol Daniell	Job Centre Plus
Ian Thompson	Director of Regeneration and Economic Dev
Neil Graham	Chair of Durham City Board
Michelle Gorman	Visit County Durham
Barbara Gubbins	County Durham Community Federation

3. Minutes of the last meeting

These were agreed as a true record and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

Matters arising some actions are still outstanding –

- MG to share results from perception research as agreed at meeting on 2nd May
- JG to share link to Durham University Strategy
- Thanks to SH for Link which will be circulated after meeting today

5. Economic Update

BT discussed the County Durham Economic Update which was circulated with the papers. The statistics are for 14th July so just ahead of where we are now. Employment rate has been rising. At the moment we are sitting at regional level but the trend was upwards. Not a lot different to previous updates. Qualifications are still going up. Visitor economy seems to be increasing. The performance highlight report shows Housing as highlighted in red but this is not a lot different to the national picture.

6. Durham University – Professor Stuart Corbridge, Vice Chancellor

BT welcomed SC to give a presentation to the Board in relation to Durham University in the City and Region.

SC mentioned that he felt there is a change in focus from the University that has been very well received in the local community.

Durham University Today:

- £350m enterprise
- Around 17,500 students
- Around 4000 employees
- Currently at Durham City, Stockton and NetPark

Three key decisions:

- Re-purposing of Queen's Campus as an International Study Centre
- Transferring School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health to Newcastle University
- Relocate Ustinov College to Sheraton Park

To move this forward:

- The University will be transparent
- Consult
- Listen and make appropriate changes
- Work in Partnership

Questions/Comments

SP mentioned that we need to expand the pipeline of EU activity we have, therefore SP was keen to understand the extent of interest the University has in possible additional EU funding that they can take on. We need to be working together to look at this. SC agreed that this would be a focus of his discussions with colleagues.

It was asked if there would be an increase in foreign students from different cultures. SC felt that no University could remain a Top University if you have closed borders so therefore would expect to see a stronger mix over time.

How do you see development of regional partners? At present a perception is that the University doesn't work with businesses. This is partly due to some of the global research bases of the Universities partners but SC recognised that local relationships are important with SMEs. We need to build on the connections we already have and look to change perceptions. JG felt that the local SME base is seeing growth and will enhance local reputation. For example at Spennymoor research is taking place using flooded coalmines, this is something which could spark a mini-revolution within a niche sector and give local growth a leading edge. SC reiterated that the university is currently making really good progress with people who are looking forward and happy to engage and would welcome further discussion on local business engagement.

The board further discussed how this may be translated into local community engagement and to support local aspirations through Durham participation. SC mentioned that there are many young women and men in the University from lower participation backgrounds than had been in the past. He mentioned they are currently working with Seaham School with students going to speak about French and Spanish to try and encourage participation in higher education.

Transport was flagged as an issue in the reach of such programmes as some schools are not accessible to students by public transport.

BT thanked SC for attending today.

7. North East Funds Programme – Andrew Mitchell, North East Finance

AM handed out a booklet on the North East Fund. The £120m fund is designed to support the growth of hundreds of North East businesses. The North East fund formally known as JEREMIE2 will offer different types of equity investments and loans to companies in a bid to drive growth, investment and job creation across the region. An agreement to launch the new initiative was signed by the seven North East Local Authorities, North East Ltd and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) last year and was due to go live on 15th June but, due to article 50 being triggered, this was delayed. The European Investment Bank is still committed to this but requires formal guarantees from government. AM can't give a firm timeframe but, being realistic, it will probably be the end of summer before the fund launches.

DD informed the group that they are trying to get the message across to people about what they are trying to do. They have committed to providing regional ambassadors to look after areas. The ambassadors will not manage the Programme but will engage with area businesses. The programme will be based around marketing and engagement. It is hoped that the non-economic targets will help to raise the awareness of the programme.
BT thanked AM and DD for coming today.

8. EU Update – Sue Parkinson

SP emphasised that it is crucial that we fully spend the ESIF allocations and invest them wisely, otherwise future, necessary, programme extensions may be rejected. She reported that we have representation not only on the regional ESIF Committee but also on new working groups connected to DCLG and future funding planning.

SP circulated copies of the current County Durham ERDF Programme Position. The list is in order of Priority Axis; the end of each column shows the total, allocation and balance. SP informed the Board that although there is a pipeline of activity that sits behind this and, as can be seen, not all of the money is yet committed. We need to use this or could risk losing it. Durham is vulnerable to transfer of funds to other transitional LEP areas if allocations are not committed. ESIF is the largest single amount of public money available and we need to use it.

Action: Partners to contact SP with any project development ideas

9. Prioritising Prevention – Gordon Elliott, Durham County Council

GE informed the Board that he is now the Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement and as part of the transformation programme the County Durham Partnership is working on moving from good to great. One of the areas of work is the prevention agenda.

He gave background to the Board:

- Prioritising Prevention was considered by the CDP Board in January and April 2017
- It was agreed to focus on a small number of prevention initiatives (3 or 4 areas)
- Financial challenge was a key driver for prevention in a range of areas:
 - Health
 - Thematic Partnerships
 - Council's Transformation Programme
 - CDP Partners

GE listed the ideas that had already been put forward in relation to "Altogether Wealthier":

- Empowering and skilling up young people
- Apprenticeships
- Careers advice and work experience
- Transition points – education to employment
- Housing Adaptations/Nudge work with Social Housing Tenants
- Cybercrime/online safety for businesses
- Small business creation
- Transport

SP mentioned that we need to be clearer on the purpose of this piece of work and what benefits we want to achieve before we can decide, as a partnership, what our priority areas are.

The group agreed that it is necessary to know what we are preventing and who will be involved; the rest will follow. The Board also felt that the word prevention has negative connotations within the economic development arena and this discussion with wider partners would need to be portrayed differently. The project should be seen as opportunity, for example to enhance people's aspirations. The board agreed that a positive angle would need to be identified before progressing. One area agreed for a focus was around youth aspirations and career progression. The board did observe that it would be a difficult programme to quantify in terms of securing additional resource from partners. BT agreed to participate on behalf of CDEP at future "Prevention Steering Groups".

SC commented that he would investigate the possibility of engaging University faculties and colleges in consideration of prevention challenges.

Action: BT to report back as required

Action: University to consider wider engagement in Prevention challenges

10. Any Other Business

SP mentioned that Catherine Pearson is her nominated deputy on ESIF Committee but Catherine has now been asked to take Cllr Neil Foster's place as a full member of the Committee. Therefore SP has asked Joanna Laverick to deputise for her at the ESIF meetings. This was endorsed by the Board members.

11. Date and Time of next meeting – 17th October 2017 at 1pm