

Devon Economic Partnership Executive Meeting

Held on Monday 18th January 2010, 8:30am
Audio Conference

Present:

Name	Organisation
Tim Jones (Chair)	Devon and Cornwall Business Council
Andrew Lightfoot	Devon Economic Partnership Executive Officer
Andrew Southall	South West Regional Development Agency
Daniel Bailyes	Devon Economic Partnership
David Incoll	Devon District Councils
Leanne Crawford	Devon Rural Network
Steve Pitcher	North Devon +
Tony Skeel	Learning and Skills Council

Introduction / Welcome

Tim thanked those who had been able to call in and apologised for the technical problems that led to a delay of the audio conference.

1. Future Direction of the Partnership

Andrew Lightfoot reported that Will Mumford was keen to acquire specifics on what the DEP will produce, the budget it would need and the contributions that would be made towards it. He was also keen for the DEP and DRN to work much more closely together.

This links its-self very closely with the question of resources that the DEP would need. This item is discussed below.

David contributed to this discussion by raising the issue of Language. He would like Language to be put under the umbrella of the DEP. At the moment it could be conceived that the focus is too Exeter centric. More publicity would be needed while also ensuring resources are put to best use. Tim was happy with this and the broader principle.

In order to better accommodate closer working with the DRN Leanne suggested that both partnerships should share a single co-ordinator in order to aid co-operation. However, there may be a risk that overall capacity could be adversely affected.

The draft work plans for both the DEP and the DRN raised a number of points that need further elaboration. Those with concerns will contact Andrew Lightfoot individually to discuss them.

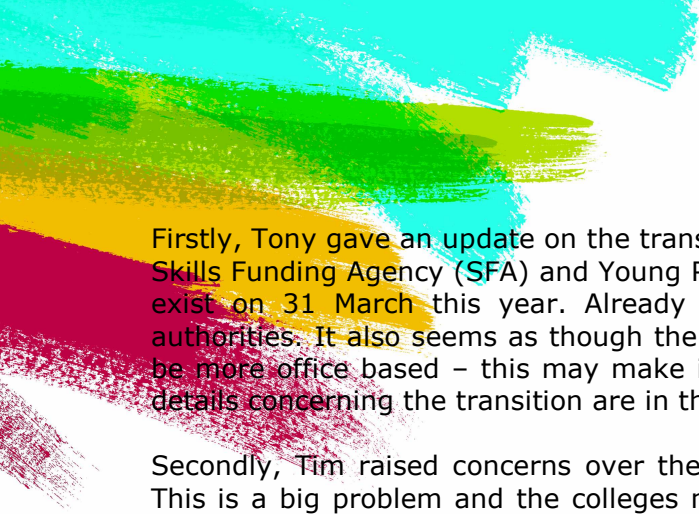
2. Potential Resources

Devon County Council is considering match funding in the region of £25k for both the DEP and the DRN, complementing the c. £25k 'in kind' contribution. This means that the DEP needs to raise £25k in funding too.

Contributions will need to be decided by the next DEP meeting on Wednesday 17 February.

Action (Andrew S, David and Tim): To reach decisions on contributions from the RDA, Districts and any other partners.

3. Implications of Recent Government Policy Statements



Firstly, Tony gave an update on the transition from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). The LSC will cease to exist on 31 March this year. Already responsibility for young people has moved to local authorities. It also seems as though the SFA will have fewer resources on the ground and will be more office based – this may make it more difficult to influence from Devon. Many of the details concerning the transition are in the air until after the general election.

Secondly, Tim raised concerns over the lack of clarity over the Capital Funding Programme. This is a big problem and the colleges need to be engaged with on this issue. Tony reported that there is not much capital funding available.

As for economic intelligence a meeting will be taking place later in the day on just this issue. Andrew Southall was concerned that a consistent approach be taken across the region in collecting economic data. The approach taken by Somerset, for instance, is much more collaborative than that taken by Devon. Andrew also queried the work of the South West Observatory.

Finally, Tim brought to the attention of the group the new flood guidance (PPS 25) and the negative affect this has had on regeneration. This issue was raised at North Devon +. This item will be put on the agenda for the DEP.

4. Work Programmes for January – March

a. Worklessness Forum and Future Jobs Fund (Andrew Lightfoot)

This agenda has been a top priority for government. St. Loyes and Groundwork have been hugely helpful in providing much of the employment for the Future Jobs Fund (FJF). In future, in order to further increase take-up, government have offered a more streamlined process for employers who have fulfilled their quotas and who want to take on more young people.

The Devon Worklessness Forum met last week and brought together over 20 people. This provides a prime example of partnership working and joined-up thinking.

b. Infrastructure Group (Tim)

A co-ordinated approach to strategic sites has been taken, and the work is linked to the Single Conversation through Mary Ridgway.

c. Productive Skills 4 Devon; Research, Funding (Andrew Lightfoot)

As part of the Revenue Reward Grant money given to PS4D, SLIM have been commissioned to work with the ESBs in Devon and Cornwall to produce further research in this area. The meeting is this afternoon, and details will be made available on the Devon Economy website.

d. Team Devon

Team Devon is now being administered by RELAYS, and a regional meeting has been pencilled in for the end of January. The library service also recently won funding which will contribute towards the cultural Olympiad.

e. Local Area Agreement

The latest reports will be completed this week and the latest LAA refresh is also coming soon. Thoughts are also turning to the new LAA if there is one from 2011. The DES may also require reflection in light of a new LAA.

f. Communications

Thoughts need to be turned to the next issue of the Economic Bulletin, and Andrew also asked those present to visit the new Devon Economy website (www.devoneconomy.co.uk) and offer their comments.

5. Agenda Items for DEP Meeting, 17 February

1. Worklessness Group update, including St. Loyes
2. Recovery from Recession, Structural Discussion – specific from RETG
3. Regional Skills Strategy update from Tony
4. The future of the partnership
5. HCA, Single Conversation, Infrastructure
6. Better Regulation for Business

6. Notes of Meeting Held 19 November 2009

No changes

7. News Round-up

- Local Authority employment units occupation numbers have held up well along with rents (David);
- Reflecting this Andrew reported that Economic Development Officers are also more positive;
- Echoing Andrew earlier, Daniel asked that those present take a look at the new Devon Economy website and to provide him with feedback. It can only become a useful tool for the partnership if members say what they want on it!
- Need to make sure that we are aligned to major infrastructure projects and their opportunities (Tim);
- The next DEP meeting will be 17 February in the Pannier Market, Tiverton.

8. Confirm date for next meeting: 23 March

Confirmed – usual time, 8:30-9:30am.