



Devon Economic Partnership (DEP): Executive Meeting

Tuesday 7th August 8.30am by Audio Conference

Present:

Tim Jones (Chair)	David Incoll
Andrew Lightfoot	Lynne Del Greco
Sue Smith	Steve Pitcher
Jen Anderton	Paul Sadler
Leanne Crawford (scribe)	Richard Ball
Colin Bray (observing)	

1.0 Organisational Issues:

a) role and membership of the Executive

b) membership of the Partnership

c) administrative arrangements

a) It was agreed that it would be helpful for the Executive to serve as a reference group, providing guidance on how the partnership should function, the main components of the work programme and prioritisation. In addition to those attending and Richard Morgan, Steve Hindley had been invited in this capacity as business representative on the Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP) Delivery Board: he was to be contacted again to clarify his participation. The direct business representation needs to be broadened in terms of the partnership.


b) The membership has developed in an ad hoc way but there are some areas that are under represented, particularly in terms of the private and voluntary sector. In terms of private sector, the Exeter and Heart of Devon and North Devon economic partnerships each could be asked to nominate an additional three people from the private sector to reinforce the links with these partnerships, and also ensure that different economic sectors are represented. Tourism can be represented through DMO but there are other sectors that the DEP still needs links with. Contact was also made with the Plymouth Sub Regional Partnership, but there has been no response. David Incoll is happy to speak to people there to try and liaise with this partnership.

Action: David Incoll to make contact with Plymouth Sub Regional Partnership

The business sector of Torbay also needs to be represented more fully.

Action: Andrew Lightfoot to contact Richard Morgan and Gordon Oliver

In terms of North Devon, coordination of economic activity through North Devon Plus is already shaping up well.



On the DMO front the general view is that there needs to be tourism representation and a linking in with the DEP, as the group emerges. This will need to be raised at the next steering group. Councillor Temperley is currently Chairing the steering group meeting.

Action: Richard Ball to raise DMO representation on DEP at next steering group meeting

Knowledge transfer and HE – both Exeter and Plymouth University had representation at the LAA 4th Theme Task Group meeting, held on 3rd August 2007. This is something that can be built on further. South Devon College particularly (Steve Kridle in terms of innovation activity) and North Devon College could provide additional links if necessary.

In terms of environment there are few representatives available, however there is a strong network between the Environment Agency and Natural England, so there is the facility for information distribution.

In terms of the infrastructure sector, it could be a question of “as and when” with representatives being pulled in when required but not present at every meeting. A culture of emailing news in before meetings can be created. Every effort should be made to ensure that sector representation is recognised and made in accordance with protocol. A way of building trust and confidence in the management of the partnership needs to be reinforced.


There needs to be flexibility, with contributors as well as members, to gather expertise and knowledge. This also applies to the role of the group and partnership links and working.

There needs to awareness of the nuances in wording of the terms of reference. Point 2 in the terms of reference possibly needs to be rephrased as the DEP needs to identify gaps in performance in some of the key agencies but not necessarily influence the deliver. The DEP should have the ability to challenge other organisations, especially at a regional level; however this needs to be clarified within the Terms of Reference.

In terms of the RDA this flexibility fits in with the requirement for added value and fit for purpose. In these early stages the flexibility is very important, but will become more defined as the process goes on.

c) Administrative Arrangements – the format for the Executive meeting is dependant on the audio conference route working. The group are happy to continue in this format.

Meetings should also not be stage managed to particular events – there should be some vehicle by which members are regularly maintaining email contact between meetings, especially if there are specific issues. There should be momentum between meetings so that big strategic issues are addressed to avoid missing opportunities. In terms of foot & mouth there needs to be a very quick



response. The livestock and market auctioneers are keeping in close touch and business at this time of the year is a significant part of their turnover, also difficulties with tourism and open access. More immediately the stock movements and the livestock market need to be addressed quickly. Dennis Brewer from the NFU is the agricultural rep on a fairly regular basis.

Clarity needed on the relationship between the operational groups and executive group on the diagram.

All agreed to Terms of Reference with these amendments.

2.0 Work Plan

Whilst there is not a long list, there is a lot of work entailed. There will also be more coming out from the Economic Strategy and LAA group in particular.

The work plan was written before the Sub National Review came out but the DEP can take this up if it feels appropriate. More issues will come out of the Leitch and comprehensive spending review.

In terms of feeding in essential information, there needs to be greater dissemination around the group. It will be up to individual members to alert others to strategic information and to maintain engagement on a regular basis to ensure the economic intelligence gap is filled and Observatory activity is reinforced. A structure for this is emerging in North Devon Plus, e.g. on the planning strategy and planning white paper.

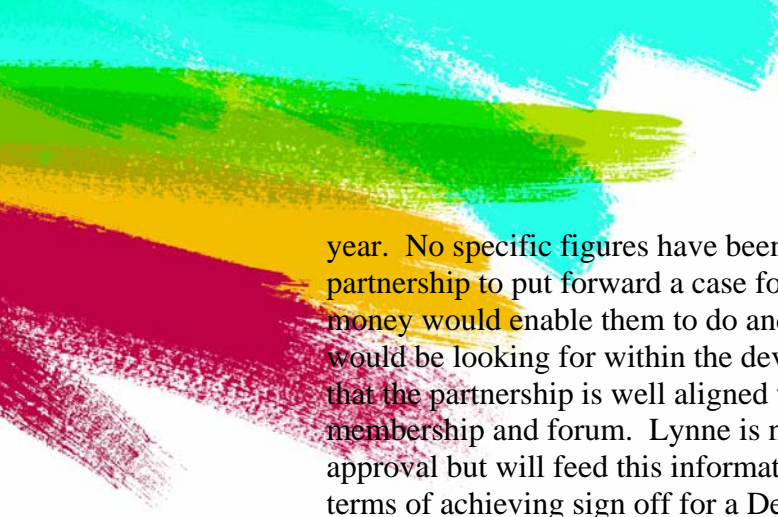
All agreed to work plan.

Action: email contacts list with suitable access code to be created for prioritisation of information for the purpose of this group

3.0 Approach to SWRDA

Background – SWRDA have invested more support for Strategic Economic Partnerships (SEPs). There is the offer of some financial support for some DEP activities. First aspect of this is if and in what form the DEP engages with the Chair of SWRDA to ensure she is fully aware of the working of the DEP and what it is achieving. The second aspect is what resources the DEP might seek to help implement the work programme.

In the past couple of years the RDA has put some funding into the Economic Partnership of other areas. Devon has not been part of this system to date. Under the new system of support for SEPs the RDA is looking for a 2 year development plan from each of the economic partnerships, which the RDA anticipate would include a request for financial support. Some partnerships have already submitted such plans and two have already gained approval for funding. The RDA would welcome an application by Devon in the form of a development plan with request for financial support on an annual basis. The kind of figure that has been allocated to other partnerships is around £50,000 a



year. No specific figures have been set for this year. It will be up to each partnership to put forward a case for what would be achieved and what the money would enable them to do and take forward. Specific things the RDA would be looking for within the development plan would be the demonstration that the partnership is well aligned with the LAA and that there is an active membership and forum. Lynne is not aware which two plans have received approval but will feed this information back to the group when identified. In terms of achieving sign off for a Devon plan the route would be for the development plan to come in via the area team, and the content would be agreed. It would then go via the area director and then into the executive director. It could be a fairly fast process for getting a Devon plan through once the principles have been agreed.

It was suggested that we might seek funding for cross boundary working, especially with Cornwall, and to help cover the impact of new communities.

It is important for the partnership to decide what it wants to draw down any monies for. The time is right now the Terms of Reference have been drawn up. There needs to be identification of funding gaps and those elements which look cross border.

The development plan should be based primarily on the work plan. There is a lot of work involved here, which may need to be externalised. Multi Area Agreement plans were discussed at the LAA meeting on 3rd August in terms of Plymouth, Torbay, Cornwall, Somerset, and potentially Exeter, something which is unique to this area.

4.0 Feedback from meeting re the LAA 4th Theme

The meeting was a useful start in terms of scoping which subject areas might be covered and bringing together a group of people with different perspectives. The DEP chair this to ensure the group is on the road to prioritisation which is a critical part of this exercise, in terms of developing the correct range of focus. It was a useful initial meeting to set the context.

The timescale of prioritisation needs further clarity. The next meeting of the Task Group is the 19th September, but in terms of the overall LAA, confirmation of the list of indicators from government from which we are invited to select up to 35 is not likely to be issued until October, and the sustainable community strategy will also be released about this time. There is still a lot of context locally and nationally that is still to emerge. It will be late autumn/winter when we need to clarify our priorities along with other groups and the DSP itself, for presentation to GOSW in March for a decision from central Government in June.

There is a job of work to do to demystify the LAA process to the private sector and put it in a market context. The processes must be simplified where possible – the language must be unpacked to relate to market place issues. The 4th Block is much wider with greater possibility for inclusion. The big issues around the LAA should be worked up within the context of what the private



sector would like to see included.

5.0 Agenda for the DEP meeting 10th August

Following additions should be made to the agenda:

- a) Quick update on European Funding particularly competitiveness
- b) Flesh out the debate on impact of new communities and demographic shift, and cross border activities
- c) Feedback from the regional SEP meeting 30th July. Maintenance of economic activity in terms of climate change agenda and planning reforms, and sustainable construction techniques. Look at how to start dumbing down the doom message but start turning it into a positive in terms of solutions. The emerging agenda around the tourism reshuffle restructure. Support for Ben Bradshaw if he is going to be effective in picking out big priorities in his role as Minister for the Region. He currently only has one day per week allocated to regional economic issues.

The SEP meeting was held at the Eden project and was welcomed by Tim Smitt, one of the government ambassadors for social enterprise. His comment was “you have a pretty difficult job doing what your doing, the way I’d do it would be to identify people I could trust back them in what they intend to do”. This was a very refreshing approach that could be brought to DEP meetings in future!

6.0 Any Other Business

The Devon Rural Network has six action groups, one of which is rural business support, set up specifically to develop the out puts for the SERC process and has since gone quiet. There is a need for the group, with the new rural strategy and section on rural productivity, to link in with the emerging economic strategy. Instead of duplicating, could there be a rural business task group that falls under the DEP but facilitated by DRN, which would ensure linkages and prioritise actions within the strategy.

This again falls under FMD debate. There are an enormous number of agricultural support businesses, so there is a need for this group to develop very quickly.

This will be discussed at the DEP meeting on 10th August.

Chair needs to decide how best to do justice to agenda for Friday’s meeting!

7.0 Date of next meeting

14th September 2007, 8.30 am. Dialling arrangements will be reissued closer to the date