



Devon Economic Partnership (DEP): Executive Meeting

Friday 14th September, 8.30am by Audio Conference

Present:

Tim Jones (Chair)	David Incoll
Andrew Lightfoot	Carl Budden
Steve Pitcher	Tony Skeel
Jen Anderton	Cathy Doidge
Leanne Crawford (scribe)	

Apologies:

Richard Morgan
Richard Ball
Sue Smith

1.0 Devon Economic Strategy

The strategy needs to be circulated in advance of the next full partnership meeting on 10th October. Chapters 1 to 4 are contextual, however Chapter 5 requires the most discussion as it details the Priorities and Actions for the Strategy.

Pages 58 & 59 are the most relevant to the LSC and seem fairly comprehensive with only fine tweaking to be done. The section appears to be a continuity of work done over the last 2 years; therefore there are no major shifts in direction.

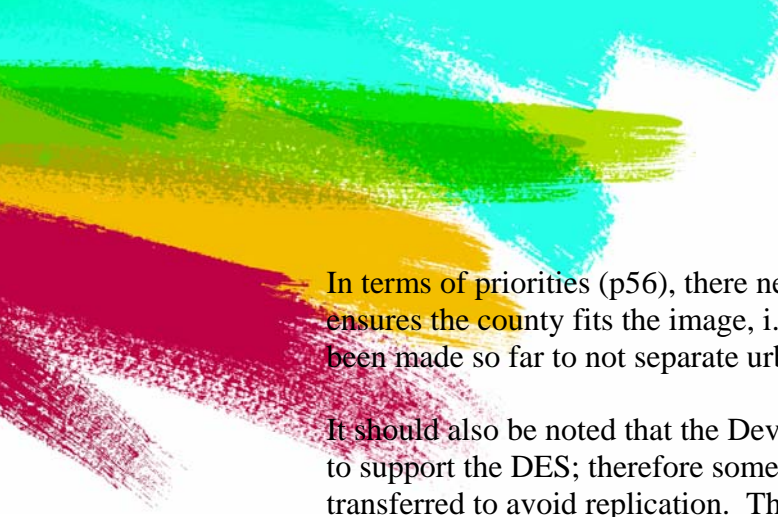
Action: Further comments on Strategy to be received by Friday 21st for circulation to wider partnership

Vision paragraph 5.4 (p55) Sustainability states only renewable energy; however there is also the issue of other resources. Can renewable energy instead be termed sustainable energy to encompass all elements, including energy saving.

The Strategy needs to be overlaid with the Branding Exercise to identify the essence of Devon, especially with respect to flexibility and strengths.

The Strategy needs to be subjected to the Somerset Test – is it currently distinctive enough for Devon? There also need to be consideration on the number of priorities and overlap; however caution should be exercised to avoid combining priorities for the sake of it and losing focus.

Priorities can also be looked at on a time scale to identify investment and resources needed to support the implementation of actions. The Strategy also needs to be subjected to a reality test.



In terms of priorities (p56), there needs to be clarity on how the Strategy ensures the county fits the image, i.e. rurality. However a conscious effort has been made so far to not separate urban and rural environments.

It should also be noted that the Devon Rural Network's Rural Strategy is there to support the DES; therefore some of the priorities stated in this could be transferred to avoid replication. The Consultation Response group will be rural proofing the DES.

The Strategy should also be subjected to the Young Peoples Test. There is appropriate reference of targeted activities for young people in worklessness, although the inclusion of Young People elsewhere could be more explicit. There also needs to be more emphasis on the vibrancy of Devon and the work/life balance. The Strategy needs to ensure that the provisions for social exclusion and skills and support hang together.

There needs to be a litmus approach to investors – does the Strategy imply an availability of a skilled workforce?

The priority communities need to be more defined, and the Strategy does not address the importance of Plymouth and Torbay (and Exeter) to the rest of Devon.

Action: Circulate the DES as is, as this will form part of the feedback process. The wider partnership may disagree with comments made in this meeting

There is a conference on 9th October for Sustainable Communities and also a meeting for the LAA 4th Theme on 19th September 2007. The Strategy and Action Plan also needs to be shown in these contexts, which will help to define priorities. This can be the focus of discussion at the wider Partnership.

2.0 Allocation of funding to work plan tasks

The minutes from the previous DEP Executive meeting on 7th August 2007, paragraph 3 states the RDA position on funding allocation.

The DEP needs to ascertain which areas are going to need additional funding. With respect to Skills and Worklessness, much of this work is being progressed through PS4D, which is identifying gaps in mainstream funding from Europe and Job Centre Plus.

There are assumptions being made about availability of funding which were addressed in the previous DEP Executive meeting, during which Lynne Del Greco stated the position of the RDA. This position currently remains the same and the RDA has agreed in principle to support Economic Partnership's in the South West, although it is up to each to produce a business plan.

The Futures Group may need additional support and this group needs to



continue its development.

There are also technological challenges for the environment sector, particularly in terms of infrastructure and hidden infrastructure.

Action: Discussion of DES with SEP Executives and sharing of best practice

There also needs to be consideration of the Missing Links, i.e. other areas of match funding, especially European, that may need to be considered at a sub group basis, and other Theme meetings. Comments will be fed back to the DEP.

3.0 Membership Categories

Brief update given on Plymouth CDC and North Devon Plus.

Plymouth2020 is the equivalent of the DEP, and it is recognised that Plymouth will be forming partnerships with both Devon and Cornwall, although historically it has been difficult to engage with Plymouth on a county level.

The membership list given has put the current circulation into categories to structure discussion on membership and approach. Gaps need to be identified and an appropriate geographical balance needs to be reached. There is a need to create an inclusive and workable group.

Currently the DEP is weak on community & voluntary sector and further education representation, and there may also be a need for a DMO rep.

4.0 Employer Engagement Partnership with DCBC

Engagement with Employers brief has been produced through PS4D which is trying to take on the role of the employment and skills boards as envisioned by Leitch.

This will be achieved by working closely with DCBC and building on previous work, along with organising a variety of events and communicating through a number of channels. A series of meeting will be held with local employer groups and DCBC will utilise their website and electronic communications rather than replicating by producing another site. DCBC have over 26,000 contacts of which around 8,000 are in Devon alone. This will also facilitate cross border connection as well as providing a direct link into chambers. This will provide access to a large number of businesses.

5.0 BSSP, feedback from conference and confirmation of DEP's response

Conference held in Taunton last week. No feedback has been given to give distinctive DEP view rather than general DCC view.

Need to recognise increased cost of providing services in rural Devon. DCC response was very comprehensive.

6.0 Agree Agenda for 10th October



Suggested items:

1. Economic Strategy and LAA related issues
2. Peninsula Enterprise – presentation of their proposals
3. Women & Enterprise – presentation by Charlotte Benson CCD
4. Feedback from working groups
5. Sub National Review
6. Six monthly update
7. Rural Business Action Group – Devon Rural Network
8. Communications Strategy including the branding exercise
9. EXECUTIVE – development of the Futures Group

7.0 Key Issues

Foot & Mouth Disease – monitor the impacts. Investigate the possibility of pushing for similar treatment as Wales and Scotland. Request that Ian Mercer and Humphrey Temperley issue a statement to this effect.

Financial Market – credit crunch is becoming visible, with downsizing of some firms, and an impact of the ability of business to borrow competitively. This may also collide with public sector pay, especially in the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review. An impending credit crisis may also affect current house building programmes.

Review of Regional Tourism Strategy – will be circulated to those concerned. Similarly, any other documents of interest can be forwarded to Leanne for circulation.

8.0 Dates of Next Meeting

DEP meetings

10th October 10am at County Hall

6th December

DEP Exective

30th October, 8.30am audio conference