

DEP Executive Audio Conference 16th July 2008

Present

Tim Jones
Andrew Lightfoot
Steve Pitcher
Cathy Doidge
Tony Skeel
David Incoll
Leanne Crawford

Apologies

Jen Brogan
Carl Budden
Richard Ball

1.0 Monitoring of the Economic Strategy and LAA outcomes

Andrew reminded the group that Step Ahead have been commissioned to prepare a reporting monitoring framework in line with the work for the skills agenda. Nigel Tremlett has met most of the LAA leads and is now making direct contact with DEP members. A workshop has been planned for the 9th September with draft ideas to be discussed, along with the reporting arrangements. This will then be signed off and work on the first 6 months report will begin in October. Key points to note will be the level of detail, in the context of the number of LAA outcomes; and also the reporting arrangements. Step Ahead have quoted £5K per quarter, but the group needs to reflect on how information will be cascaded, i.e. through partners or through analysis by organisations such as Step Ahead.

It was questioned how economic delivery would be affected by economic turbulence - national circumstances need to be reflected as well as local delivery, particularly in terms of housing and employment space. It was confirmed that National Indicators will be included as comparisons. Links are being made at the local level, with a representative from all the local Districts and the NPAs present on the group, although more work needs to be done in terms of making connections.

Action: Encourage comprehensive attendance at Workshop on 9th September

2.0 Feedback from “visioning” and “innovation” workshops

Tim fed back on the visioning event that was held at Riverford on 10th July, facilitated by Michael Perreau. This event was well attended, and 3 workshop groups came out of the discussions – where we should be going in terms of knowledge and skills transfers in terms of environment etc; development of a 10 year plan and restructuring of what Devon can be doing; and challenges to process.

A small action team is planning on revisiting the workshop notes, the ideas from which should give a good baseline to collect new ideas, e.g. challenges to process and response, including those going in the wrong direction, and content issues.

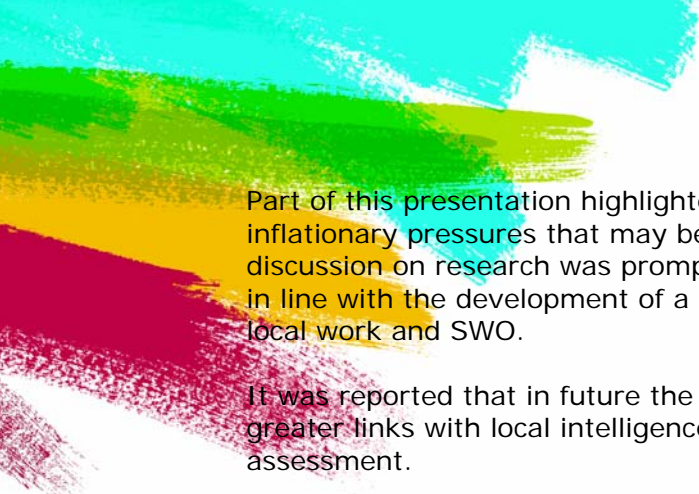
Action: Note of workshop to be circulated to Executive partners

3.0 Feedback from Strategic Economic Partnership meeting

Note included with agenda.

Presentations had been made on the South West Economy in 2008.

Action: Handouts from all presentations to be circulated



Part of this presentation highlighted differentials between parts of the region and inflationary pressures that may begin to show and impact next year. A discussion on research was prompted in light of what the RDA is doing regionally, in line with the development of a research team within Business Link, as well as local work and SWO.

It was reported that in future the RDA sees economic partnerships having greater links with local intelligence networks and a greater focus on economic assessment.

The key issues around productivity were looked at outside the terms of GVA, and noted that agricultural land values are increasing despite areas of relative poor performance. It was warned that land being bought is not being used for agricultural purposes.

It was questioned whether the mechanisms in place, in terms of the RDAs approach, are quick enough to respond to current markets, and was agreed that a flexible and speedy process is needed. It was agreed that some of the current changes are structural and that it was impossible to know the ramifications of this at this stage.

A presentation had been given on reducing differentials, with increased regional empowerment and a reduction in the divide between London and the rest of the UK and how this would work in practice.

A report had been given on LAA processes, and it was stated that the Devon LAA was accepted without modification and was felt to be one of the best in the region.

A final presentation had been given on SNR Structural Architecture, devised by the RDA and Regional Assembly. It was reported that there are 4 working groups based around strategy; strategic planning and growth; scrutiny; and the economic development agenda. There is also an overall planning group, which has representation from Local Authority Chief Executives.

It was reported that the RDA sees the SEP group as an important vehicle for engagement, and was questioned whether there is anything else that the DEP could be doing to feed in strategically. It was reiterated that the SEP could be used as a platform.

Action: Ideas to be forwarded to Andrew or Tim

Andrew reported that there is a proposal from the RDA to arrange a conference during the Autumn with chairs of the Economic Partnerships and LSPs with high profile speakers.

4.0 Budget and outputs

An email was sent round prior to the meeting highlighting outputs and milestones agreed with the RDA.

These were:

- Economic Strategy mini guide produced by June (achieved)
- Economic Strategy 2009 Delivery plan published by Jan 09
- Economic strategy monitoring reports quarterly beginning October
- PS4D Delivery plan 2008-10 published by August 08 (on course)
- Team Devon Action Plan published by July 08 (due August) – a session will be held on 30th July
- Employment Space Strategy published by June 08 (due September) – a

workshop is being held around this on 25th July and a draft report will be circulated

- 9 events held pa 4 held (2 as part of productive skills work, visioning event and innovation event), 2 planned

It was confirmed that there is a budget of £10K allocated for events, therefore suggestions are requested.

Action: Ideas for events to be forwarded to Andrew

5.0 Consider arrangements for special meetings of the Partnership re employment space and business simplification.

A workshop is being held at Sandy Park on 25th July, starting at 12pm, and anticipated to finish at 3.30pm. An open invitation has been extended to all of the DEP.

The RDA has expressed concern about the length of the report and its strategic nature, and the challenge is to now turn this into a live usable document. An executive version will be sent out by 18th July. It was agreed that this document is key in terms of the current economic situation and driving the economy forward, and looking at development in the context of sustainability and environmental issues.

It was agreed that the local information devised from site visits needed to be more robust, with some inaccuracy, and that outcomes are quite weak.

It was stated that the document could be key for LDF processes and proving a case in terms of planning. David Incoll stated that he was happy to be a conduit for the Districts to ensure local district involvement.

The Employment Space Strategy could be used to address blockages in the planning process. It was stated and agreed that the solutions will be site specific, especially in terms of environment and sustainability standards.

It was questioned whether the facilities and opportunities of managed workspace could be examined in greater detail in terms of what is already in existence and what works well, and whether things can be done differently. It was agreed that more debate was needed around this.

It was agreed that the consultants have had a difficult job in terms of the draft RSS being weak in terms of links between housing and employment space for example. The document will be a useful tool to complement work on innovation and the summary report contains a number of priority sites.

It was confirmed that the summary report will be revised in light of the workshop to be held on 25th July. It was agreed that a special, half day meeting be arranged in mid-September to consider revised business support systems and to sign off the employment space strategy. The DEP meeting on 6th October will then focus on monitoring arrangements for the DES and the first 6 monthly report.

6.0 Reflection on implications for the Partnership of the Boundary Commission consultation

It was confirmed that the closing date for the consultation will be 28th September.

It was agreed that the DEP need to start thinking around relationships and partnerships with other partners (including private and voluntary sector); and implications of delivery.

It was agreed that clarification is still needed around the decision, and that it should be ensured that economic development mechanisms are in place for the whole of Devon. In anticipation of the final decision, the Partnership will need to consider recommendations early in the Autumn.

7.0 Confirm additional members

Martin Wickham (North Devon +) and Steve Parrack (Torbay Development Agency) agreed.

Nicola Poultney (Devon DMO – Destination Devon) and Chris Redding (Peninsula Enterprise) were also agreed.

8.0 Agree development of protocols for partnership working

Andrew reported that there were two aspects to this proposal – the DEP has developed in an organic way but some areas need to be clearer; and as partnership working increases there is a grey area around procurement, e.g. recent work on the RDPE.

There needs to be an arrangement in place to work in an openly transparent way without undergoing a full blown procurement exercise. It was stated that intellectual property rights should also be considered.

***Action: Andrew to form working group to develop these protocols.
Volunteers requested***

9.0 Note of Meeting 14th May 2008

All agreed, all action point fulfilled

10.0 Dates next meeting

17th September

19th November

both to be held at 8.30 am by audio conference.

News Round Up

- Steve reported that economic development in North Devon is beginning to suffer. Secondly a meeting is being held on 16th July on planning around North Devon College
- David reported that the housing market in West Devon is still holding up well, and that the District is on target to delivery affordable housing
- Cathy reported that the Environment Agency is reviewing the impact of the economy on the environment sector in terms of opportunities and threats, and new legislation. There may also be new opportunities around resource usage
- Tony confirmed that the merger between North and East Devon College has been officially announced
- Andrew reported at DCC is looking at supporting some of the Post Offices highlighted for potential closure. Also in terms of the SNR, 2 director positions have been created in the Environment, Economy and Culture unit of DCC. Interviews were held on 15th July for a new Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy, but no appointment was made. Ian Harrison has been appointed to the post of Director of Transport, Environment and Culture.