

**Devon Economic Partnership Executive**  
**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> march, 8:30am**

**Present:**

Tim Jones	Chair
Andrew Lightfoot	Executive Officer
Lucy Gough	DEP
Andrew Southall	RDA
Tony Skeel	LSC
Cathy Doidge	Environment Agency
David Incoll	Devon CEX
Leanne Crawford	DRN
Jenna Corke	Scribe

**Apology**

Steve Pitcher

North Devon Council

**1. Devon Economic Strategy Delivery Plan**

It was agreed to commission Step Ahead Research to draw together a revised Delivery Plan for 2009/2010, including the agreed actions in response to the recession.

*Action: Face to face meeting before next audio conference to discuss strategic issues*

**2. DEP Work Plan:**

**2.1. Graduate placement**

Lucy Gough was introduced to the group. Lucy is on a National Graduate Placement and has been involved in emergency planning recently. She will be with the Economy unit for six months to help with DEP and the Rural Network.

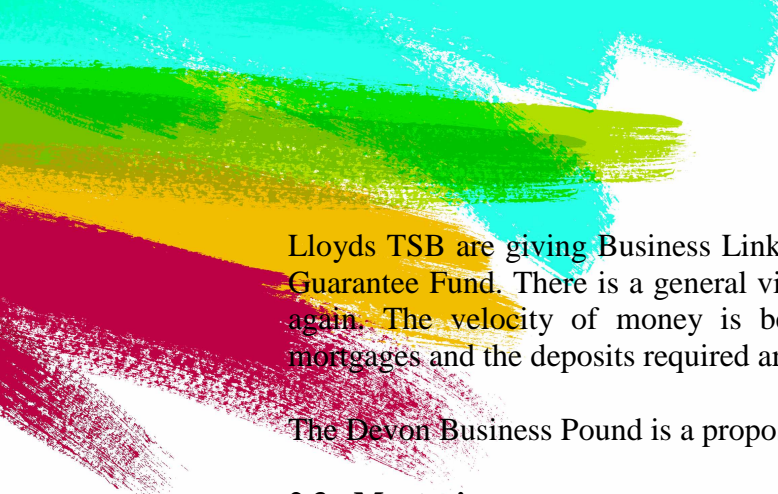
A regional recovery plan is needed for school leavers and graduates to keep their skills within Devon. Connections with FE establishments are good but need to maintain and further these connections. Team Devon met with Tim Coles from Exeter University to discuss their graduate placement programme.

The Environment Agency take on a lot of summer staff and MSC programmes. It would therefore be possible to have graduates for specific jobs. The main problem with environmental work is that there are a lot of graduates willing to volunteer to gain the experience.

Bristol University introduced the Keyworker Housing Allocations to help with accommodation which helped to retain the graduates.

**2.2. Access to finance seminar**

There was a suggestion, in addition to the monthly audio calls with representatives from the banking sector, to also have a workshop to get them all together.



Lloyds TSB are giving Business Link information about their Enterprise Finance Guarantee Fund. There is a general view that the market is beginning to improve again. The velocity of money is beginning to increase. However, access to mortgages and the deposits required are still high so this is still cause for concern.

The Devon Business Pound is a proposal for future discussion.

### **2.3. Mentoring**

There is a meeting on this topic on 27<sup>th</sup> March at County Hall – all are welcome.

Competitiveness programme to bring together current business schemes. Idea to get people together with experience of mentoring to reflect on their own experiences. For example, North Devon volunteer mentors had a good networking group in the past.

Lots of sectors need business mentoring so this is a good start. Specific sectors may then need further, more specific, mentoring.

Many businesses have Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Suggestion to keep training in Devon to be cost effective – perhaps Dartington Hall as they are developing a school for social entrepreneurs.

*Action: Tony Skeel to email everyone regarding CPD*

### **2.4. Solutions for businesses**

Greg Taylor (RDA) held a positive but robust discussion on this topic with Devon partners. Agreement to try and get better joining up between relevant agencies in Devon e.g. RDA and Business Link. This is perhaps too simplistic and doesn't focus on specific sectors or delivery issues. Agreement that there are a lot of people not being spoken to who could be a great resource to look at the issues businesses have e.g. inland revenue.

### **2.5. Other sub groups (PS4D, LAA, Infrastructure, Team Devon, EU programmes, Devon Brand)**

- Reminder that the sub groups are coming up with good actions.
- There was an EU programmes seminar at the end of January, to be followed by more specific working groups.
- The Devon Brand needs to engage with public sectors more
- PS4D need to look at Skills for Life as there are some delivery problems. English @ Work has produced some good work. Ben Neild provided the latest statistics for Devon at the most recent meeting.

It was agreed that it would be useful to nominate vice chairs for these groups which would lead to a more concerted delivery.

*Action: The infrastructure group needs to reconvene.*

## 2.6. Other initiatives :

### - Home insulation

Environment – greening infrastructure

### - Developer capacity

### - Young people

Youth Parliament meeting in two weeks.

### - Rural business group

Need to pin down the structure on the Rural Farming and Food Board. Rural Businesses - Have consulted with Stewart Horne who has suggested potential members and we will continue to develop the group with help from Lucy. Also keen to redevelop the rural proofing capability of DRN. Progress made will be reviewed at the next meeting.

### - Dinner for media people

To improve communication. This is a two way initiative as it will also help the media. We need a more robust engagement with the media to promote good news stories.

## 2.7. Membership review

**Action:** Agreed to review membership categories and county wide coverage e.g. Homes and community agency to get on board. Growth point groups around the county may have indirect overlap. Therefore should we include representatives to join us?

## 2.8. Review of how DEP is working

Young Foundation report had been circulated. This has provided ideas on how to reflect on DEP in the future.

There was a discussion regarding the executive group in relation to the whole DEP group. The executive agenda has increased. Agreement that executive must be a strong decision making group. The sub-groups roles are to better take forward work and report back to executive.

*Action: Special meeting for the executive to be arranged*

## 3. Feedback from Strategic Economic Partnerships meeting including Sub National Review

Presentation in light of sub national review and decrease in DEP funding.

## 4. Agenda items for DEP meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April

- Low carbon economy opportunities
  - Home insulation is a LAA initiative. It provides lower electricity bills and also provides employment.
- Involvement of young people
- SNR developments, review of delivery vehicles
- English @ Work presentation



**5. Notes of meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January**  
All agreed

**6. Confirm date of next meeting 12<sup>th</sup> May**

Agreement to have an interim meeting prior to the next DEP Executive meeting.