

Devon Economic Partnership Executive Meeting
Thursday 22 April, 8:30am
Audio Conference

Minutes

Present

Name:	Organisation:
Tim Jones (Chair)	Devon and Cornwall Business Council
Andrew Lightfoot	Devon Economic Partnership / Devon County Council
Daniel Bailyes	Devon Economic Partnership
David Incoll	Devon District Councils
Philip Wagstaff	Devon Rural Network
Steve Pitcher	North Devon +

Apologies

Name:	Organisation:
Andrew Southall	South West Regional Development Agency
Jay Talbot	Community Council Devon
Mary Talbot-Rosevear	Devon Farming and Food Board

1. Welcome and Introductions

Tim thanked those who had called in and addressed the purpose of the meeting, which would be to follow-up on yesterday's DEP meeting and pursue any action points arising from it.

2. Future Organisation and Structure of the Partnership

The discuss was based around Andrew Lightfoot's proposal, which can be found on the link below:

<http://www.devoneconomy.co.uk/assets/PDFs/DEP/DEP%20Future.doc>

Andrew Lightfoot has received three comments so far. These have been copied below for your information:

Environment Agency (EA)

- Welcome the chance to comment and welcome the recognition that we have to work differently to balance the dual challenge of closer partnership working (and it feels to me like we've made good strides in this direction) in the context of shrinking budgets and shrinking resources
- I can see a more flexible approach in which meetings are themed such that different partners need attend only relevant themed meetings. Everything else can be shared by newsletter. This recognises shrinking resources - if we have less people then there will not be any one to provide time to the DEP.
- Contributions: I am doubtful we can provide a cash contribution but can see that if we do have resources (time) which at the moment we do, then we could commit to providing an in-kind contribution. I am not sure what we would be getting for our cash. I'd be very keen to offer facilities (meeting space) and facilitation/hosting time.

South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)

- No problem with direction of travel, DEP and DRN coming together and widening participation BUT I think that as well as additions (PCDC and TDC) there need to be those who stand down CCD and voluntary sector groups (I'm not sure about Enterprise Plymouth)
- On the issue of funding you know there will be NO core funding from the RDA but the issue of funds for specific projects is still out there with our Board - Andy Wood will advise me when he can. I do think you should get some core funds from PCDC and TDC as well as more from the District Councils!!
- Given the broader constituency I'm very supportive of less meetings and 2 per year seems good and probably a whole day so that all DEP and DRN issues are covered?
- Should the Task and Finish Groups meet less regularly as well - 3/ yr or does quarterly work perfectly well (I.e if it ain't broke don't fix it)!
- I'm not sure from the paper how the Devon Economic and Spatial Sounding Board works and who are the contributors/invitees?
- If all key meetings are reducing (making money go further) should the Exec Telecom move to once every 2 (or even 3) months?
- Looking at the table of work packages I have a particular concern that there is nothing in the plan which specifically looks at working with strategic and high growth companies throughout Devon and whilst contributing organisations (DCC, RDA, PCDC, BL and DC's) all do work in this area we are missing a trick on "collective intelligence", making 1+1>2 and providing best benefit back to the companies concerned. Given the EST paper today we could do with a particular focus on the RE sector and how capacity building can be done (and done quickly)!!!

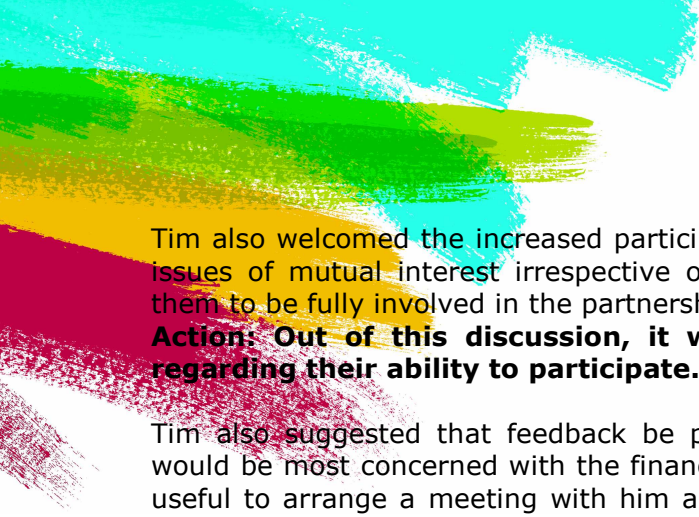
Job Centre Plus (JCP)

- Would like some clarification about whether the various groups listed will still carry on in their present form/timetable, and whether the partnership membership will be for the DEP/DRN?
- With regards to a subscription, as you are aware as a public sector organisation we contribute in kind via staff resource and would find great difficulty in authorising a monetary payment.
- As far as the rest of the document is concerned we are happy with the principle and continue to offer our support at all levels.

All of the comments were generally supportive, along with comments made in this meeting.

Picking up on the feedback from SWRDA, Tim raised the issue of membership and those groups not included under the new arrangements. Andrew argued that primarily the DEP ought to retain its focus on economic issues. Community organisations that focus upon social enterprises ought to remain – but only in that capacity. Andrew would not recommend a system whereby the community sector provided a single representative, since the main value lies in the individuals who attend.

On the issue of funding, David Incoll met with leaders of the Districts on Friday, arguing that if they wished to exert influence within the partnership, then they ought to contribute financially towards it. A decision is due at the end of the month.



Tim also welcomed the increased participation of Plymouth, and their willingness to engage in issues of mutual interest irrespective of geographic political boundaries. Andrew would like them to be fully involved in the partnership, and not selective in their participation.

Action: Out of this discussion, it was agreed that Andrew would contact Torbay regarding their ability to participate.

Tim also suggested that feedback be provided to Will Mumford. Andrew reported that Will would be most concerned with the finances and the sums people are contributing. It would be useful to arrange a meeting with him and the executive to gain a clear understanding of his requirements.

Action: Andrew to arrange such a meeting.

Finally, it was suggested that we each individually suggest to Andrew those people / organisations that ought to be represented within the DEP's new membership.

3. Devon Rural Network

Philip reported on a meeting that took place yesterday afternoon in Okehampton, regarding an initiative proposed by Devon County Forum to develop and explore a framework for the community aspects of the organisations. The DRN are looking into the feasibility.

The concern of the group was that the focus of the County Forum was not the same as the DEP – which is primarily economic. However, there may be more common ground than previously expected, such as communities developing their own renewable energy. There is also the possibility of influencing the County Forum with the needs of business and strengthening funding bids. It was decided that no commitments would be made, but that the issue would be worth exploring.

Andrew also commented that, with the focus of the Council administration on economic development, he would not be able to spend a considerable amount of time with the community sector. However, the community sector certainly can engage with economic development in a number of ways. For instance, the Energy Savings Trust's presentation at the DEP yesterday highlighted the vital importance of engaging with communities to achieve our objectives. The branding exercises being carried out by the Plymouth City Development Company, again from the presentation yesterday, requires community participation.

4. The Energy Savings Trust

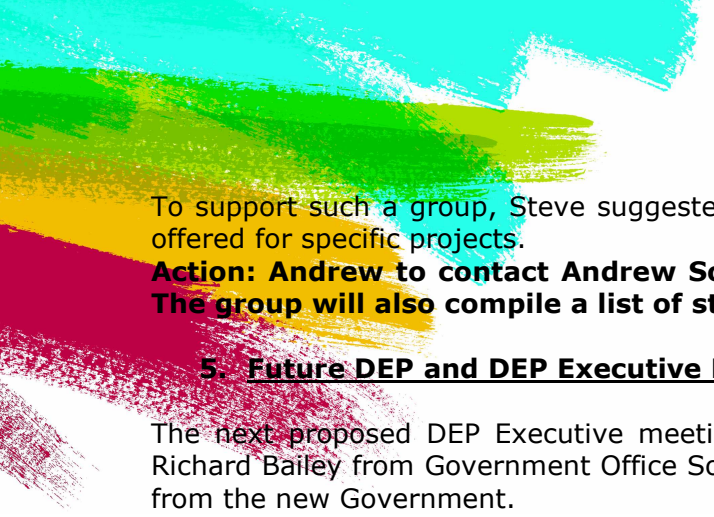
A more detailed look into Ian's presentation yesterday can be found in the meeting minutes.

Tim welcomed Ian's detailed presentation, and the pilot pan-Devon approach being considered. A funding bid is currently being put together, dealing not only with insulation but with alternative energy too. Tim would like to provide a coordinated response to Ian.

Andrew welcomed Ian's presentation and is keen to be involved. There is the potential to develop clusters of activity in towns such as Newton Abbot and Barnstaple – as well as to tackle issues of fuel poverty in rural areas.

Action: Andrew to write a letter of support from the DEP to complement the support being provided by Devon County Council.

Tim expressed his opinion that all the players on this agenda in Devon ought to be brought together to move the issue forward. Andrew suggested that an approach similar to that adopted by the Cornwall Marine Network would be beneficial. However, David pointed out the possibility that a group like this may already exist on Dartmoor. More information on them would need to be acquired first before any decisions are made.



To support such a group, Steve suggested that SWRDA could provide support from the funds offered for specific projects.

Action: Andrew to contact Andrew Southall and Will Mumford about this possibility. The group will also compile a list of stakeholders who could form such a network.

5. Future DEP and DEP Executive Meetings

The next proposed DEP Executive meeting will be on **Tuesday 25 May**. In the meantime, Richard Bailey from Government Office South West has been invited to provide the latest news from the new Government.

DEP meetings have been booked for 22 June, 9 September and 11 November – all starting at 10am.