

## Devon Economic Partnership

Held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2009, 2pm  
Larkbeare House, Exeter

### Present:

Tim Jones (chair)	DCBC/Enterprise Plymouth	Andrew Lightfoot	DEP Executive Officer
Pete Grigorey	Environment Agency	Karime Hassan	East Devon District Council
Sally Kittle	Job Centre Plus	Andrew Ashley	Enterprise Plymouth
Paul Gompertz	Environment Devon	Michael Cozens	South Hams District Council
Ian Morris	GOSW	Cllr. Will Mumford	Devon County Council
Peter Harding	Community Council of Devon	Leanne Crawford	Devon Rural Network
Liz Oram	Business Link	Jon Vernon	North Devon +
Lucy Gough	DEP/ DRN	Jeremy Filmer-Bennett	DCBC
Debbie Passmore	Torbay Development Agency / Torbay & South Devon Employment and Skills Board		
Richard Ball	Exeter City Council / Exeter & Heart of Devon Employment and Skills Board		
Graham Morris	Plymouth Employment and Skills Board		

### Apologies:

Andrew Southall	SWRDA	Peter Tansey	Devon Renaissance
Peter Cloke	GOSW	Cllr. Bill Hitchins	South Hams District Council
Tony Skeel	LSC	Karen Chapman	Job Centre Plus
Graeme Bell	Devon County Council	Nicola Poultney	Visit Devon
Derek Phillips	Exeter Chamber of Commerce	David Incoll	CEX Group / WDBC / SHDC
Alan Denby	Torbay Development Agency	Paul Sadler	Environment Agency
David Parlbay	Plymouth Chamber of Commerce	Bob Baggott	University of Plymouth
Edward Chorlton	Devon County Council	Chris Redding	Business Link
Stewart Horne	WDBIP	Terry Murch	Midas
Rupert Owen	Plymouth City Council	Les Roper	SWRDA
Vanessa Saunders	Torridge District Council	David Shephard	FSB

### 1) Welcome and Introductions

Tim welcomed the group to the meeting and introductions were given around the table.

Tim informed the group that after 6 months, Lucy would be leaving the Economy Unit to move on to a new placement in the Procurement team in Children and Young People's Services. Tim thanked Lucy for her work for DEP and its sub groups and wished her well in the future.


### 2) Presentation on Exeter Growth Point Project – Karime Hassan

Karime, Corporate Director at East Devon District Council, gave a PowerPoint presentation on developments within the Exeter Growth Point, namely Cranbrook, Science Park and Skypark. He explained that the developments were not just about housing, but also about employment with large numbers of jobs being created.

The challenge is how to deliver these large scale projects during the current economic recession. A considerable amount of upfront infrastructure is required, but there were issues for developers around both cash flow and viability. Cash flow issues have been minimised by the establishment of the Regional Infrastructure Fund - £22million will now be invested into key infrastructure projects with developers paying back money over time. Viability issues are being addressed thanks to a £6.5 million New Growth Point grant for the Clyst Honiton Bypass.

Science Park – milestone reached with initial planning application submitted. The development will be in a campus style, with building clusters and good connections to the city. Improvements are needed at M5 Junction 29 and there will be a green bridge linking the Science Park to the city, via cycling and walking.

Skypark – this is a key employment site and will be an urban business park. St Modwen are currently preparing applications. Flybe are looking to establish the Flybe Academy and this has



attracted SWRDA funding, and is waiting for a funding decision from the LSC. It is hoped that there will be 2 flight simulators available on site by April 2010.

An environmental agenda also has to be considered during these large scale developments. It is not just about growth, there needs to be quality in accord with our high aspirations. Cranbrook has been identified as a prototype eco-town by the Government. This aspect of development is still very much a learning process and is progressing in partnership with the development industry. A Low Carbon strategy has been developed for the whole Growth Point and a £2.5 million grant has been received from the Homes and Communities Agency for a Combined Heat and Power Plant that will serve both Skypark and Cranbrook, and potentially Science Park as well.

There was then discussion around the table about how we should be responding to these developments and how they will sit in the local economy. There are opportunities for Employment and Skills Boards as we know in advance that certain skills are going to be required. It will be a challenge to source the workforce locally and there are already discussions starting to happen as to how we should prepare. Local sourcing is also part of the sustainability codes and if the local supply is the fastest route to market then any legal problems will be avoided. Preparation of the workforce is key and this needs to start quickly.

There is also a need to understand the nature of the procurement package in terms of time limits, skill sets, haulage, landscaping etc. Business Link are already working with Hinkley Point in Somerset on the procurement process and involving local businesses – they could do a similar thing in Devon for this. There are opportunities for businesses across the county to engage.

Questions about the environmental aspects of the scheme were raised and Karime explained to the group that there was work ongoing around green infrastructure and that part of the town would be a nature reserve. Biodiversity issues were integral to the design and are not being considered only as an afterthought.

Issues of community cohesion within the new Cranbrook developments were also raised. Karime explained that a multi purpose building would be built, with relevant partners such as PCT, CAB and the Police having been brought together early on in the process to work out how that building will be used. Support workers will also be available in the community initially, with specific buildings being built later – plots have already been identified for this future development.

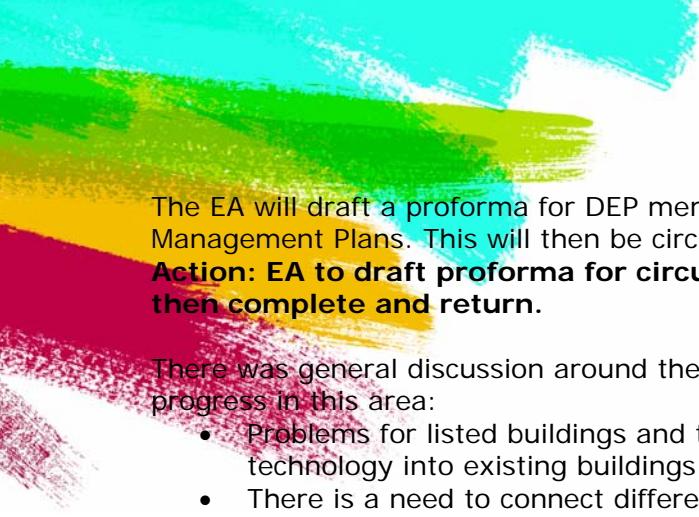
Michael Cozens then gave the group an update on the Sherford development, which will include at least 4400 homes and up to 6000, plus employment space. Section 106 agreements are being finalised and elements are included that seek to address employment and skills issues as already discussed. The likelihood of shortfall for infrastructure elements is high, but there is information from Government based on the US model of accelerated development zones.

**Action: A presentation on the Sherford New Community to be given at a future DEP meeting.**

### **3) Developing Low Carbon Economy Actions – Pete Grigorey**

Following the presentation given at the last DEP meeting in June on the Low Carbon Economy, the Executive have adopted the action plan that the group of presenters have prepared for Devon. An updated version of this Action Plan was circulated to the group and is attached with the minutes.

**Action: ALL members of DEP to look at this Action Plan and suggest any minor amendments they feel are needed and volunteer to participate in the actions set out where appropriate.**



The EA will draft a proforma for DEP members to complete about their own Carbon Management Plans. This will then be circulated to all members.

**Action: EA to draft proforma for circulation to DEP members. ALL DEP members to then complete and return.**

There was general discussion around the table about the Low Carbon Economy and how to progress in this area:

- Problems for listed buildings and the problem of retrofitting carbon reduction technology into existing buildings were raised.
- There is a need to connect different sectors – environmental, energy and businesses. There has already been a successful event held with representatives from the marine industries sector and the renewable sector to start to establish links.
- In terms of business engagement – ideas need to be framed in terms of cost saving rather than in environmental terms as they will be more interested.
- The links between cost savings and energy efficiency need to be communicated clearly and effectively to businesses.
- The supply side will need to be set up quickly to ensure it is able to cope with any sudden increases in demand.
- There is a need to still be looking ahead to the long term. Business Link has an Environmental Liaison Officer to ensure that advisors are thinking about the bigger picture when having discussions with clients.
- There is a need to think about the skills required for new emerging industries in this sector and also those required for existing businesses to deal with new legislation and techniques.
- The resources at both Exeter and Plymouth Universities should be tapped into.
- There is also a need to widen the discussion – carbon is only one element of the problem, with waste reduction and pollution also needing addressing. We need a holistic approach to all of these issues.

There was also discussion around the buy in from elected members:

- Karime reported that at East Devon DC discussion was very much focused on the Council getting its own carbon management in order in terms of transport and housing stock, with little discussion focused on the wider business sector.
- Michael reported that South Hams DC have adopted a Carbon Management Plan, but that there are still varying personal opinions among Members.

Ian Morris commented that the draft guidance for the Local Economic Assessment reflects this discussion.

There is to be an annual Devon event to get people together discussing these sorts of issues with the first one due to be held in September 2010.

Pete mentioned that the next ENVEC conference - the South West's main climate change conference in 2009 – is being held in Weston-super-Mare on 8<sup>th</sup> October. Further details are available at <http://www.oursouthwest.com/envec/#2009>

#### **4) Progress Update from Employment & Skills Boards**

##### **Debbie Passmore – Torbay and South Devon**

- Have been up and running for 8 months now.
- General perception is positive.
- Employers and core partners groups are now established and have both met twice.
- A chair should be recruited shortly.
- So far they have supported 6 initiatives – the largest of these has been TEARS (Torbay Employers Apprenticeship Reward Scheme) which is led by Connexions and has funding until March 2010. At the moment the scheme is only running in Torbay, but they are hoping to extend it into Teignbridge and South Hams. The initiative has generated both regional and national interest.

- Torquay, Paignton and Brixham also recently took part in a Skill Smart survey, where a combination of mystery shoppers and customer surveys were used to identify the best towns in the country in terms of retail and customer service skills. Torquay has come out top, out of 82 towns across the country and will receive their award at an event on the evening of 6<sup>th</sup> September. Paignton and Brixham were both placed within the top 20. Feedback from this survey will be used to identify gaps in skills and help to direct future work.

#### **Richard Ball – Exeter and Heart of Devon**

- There are a number of ongoing pieces of work:
  - Looking at the Growth Point agenda – Richard has already started to have conversations with Karime about skills requirements. They need to find out the volume and nature of both immediate and longer term requirements.
  - Trying to anticipate demand for skills – how the position has changed due to the recession.
  - Have identified premises for Skill Shops presence on the High Street. Resources need to be identified.
  - Mapping career paths to try and clarify routes for those seeking employment and where training is needed or currently available – have initially focused on legal support roles.
  - Discussion around part qualifications as opposed to full qualifications – this is part of a national debate.
  - Want increased engagement with schools to motivate young people to go into training and to find out what their levels of aspiration are.

#### **Graham Morris – Plymouth**

- Currently half way through their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of operation.
- They have a private sector led board with public sector members and are focused on strategy and facilitation rather than delivery.
- Their initial focus was the need for a long term strategy to meet job demands, however the emphasis has shifted and they are now responding to employment issues.
- A lack of previous capacity and ability to think strategically has been recognised.
- Priorities are science/technology and engineering skills. They need to engage more with younger people and the pre 19 agenda.
- There is also a need for increased dialogue with Government departments.
- A problem has been identified where the development of skills has been based on popularity rather than being employer led.
- There are general concerns about the future of Employment & Skills Boards after April 2010. They will need confirmation soon otherwise partners will start to disengage.

#### **Jon Vernon – North Devon**

- They are still working towards the creation of their Employment and Skills Board.
- Draft terms of reference have now been produced linking it into the North Devon + Board.
- There is still a debate around whether the focus should just be on skills or if business support should also be included.
- There is currently a good relationship between training providers, but there needs to be increased strategic direction.
- They also have concerns about continuity after April 2010.

#### **5) Opportunities for increased private sector engagement in Partnership activities**

Funding has been allocated within the Partnership budget for private sector engagement. Interested to hear observations/thoughts/comments on what the Partnership can do to supplement current activity in this area.

- There is a need to link with other public sector and quasi public sector organisations to make the information available about initiatives clearer.
- Links should be made to Solutions for Business and Business Simplification

- Opportunities for direct support after diagnosis has been made are still very fragmented.
- Graham Morris spoke of a successful engagement programme that was run in Plymouth to engage with retailers. They funded a sector coordinator who was based in the Chamber of Commerce. All training providers were asked to stop their own engagement programmes to allow this one person to be the sole broker/interface between the businesses and the providers.
- However, different groups will need different solutions and will be willing to engage with different people. Different areas of the county will also need different approaches.
- Suggestion that any engagement needs to be about specific issues or with strategic sectors.
- Money could be used to match fund another initiative.

**Action: Jeremy Filmer-Bennett to chair a small group (max 3 other people) to discuss possible options for engagement. If you are interested in participating in this discussion please email Lucy ([lucy.gough@devon.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.gough@devon.gov.uk)) as soon as possible.**

## 6) Future of the Partnership

Letters from SWRDA and a SWOT analysis of the Partnership had been circulated prior to the meeting.

There is a need to discuss the future of DEP in light of future funding arrangements and other activity within the sub region.

- It is suspected that the future lies in MAAs – there needs to be increased coherence across economic areas outside of administrative areas. The MAA style approach to the Local Economic Assessment is an indication of this.
- The funding from the RDA which is being withdrawn amounted to £50,000 per year. The other funder of the Partnership is DCC through LABGI, but this has also been significantly reduced.
- There is a need to think both geographically, in terms of the involvement of Plymouth, Torbay and even Cornwall, as well as what topics should be covered.
- A fundamental review of the Partnership is required – what is it trying to achieve and how will it do this. Is Partnership activity affecting the bottom line for businesses?
- There seems to be more take than give at the moment and this needs to be more balanced.
- Despite less resources, decreased funding increases the need for this sort of cross boundary dialogue.

Discussions on this theme are ongoing.

**Action: ALL to send any more thoughts/comments to Andrew Lightfoot ([andrew.lightfoot@devon.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.lightfoot@devon.gov.uk))**

## 7) Update on Partnership Activity

- **Productive Skills for Devon**
  - Currently looking at how £1.66m LPSA reward money is to be spent
  - Also looking at a new research proposal from SLIM
  - Next meeting – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September
- **Team Devon**
  - Action Plan launched at Devon Games to Inspire on 5<sup>th</sup> July
  - Team Devon promotional DVD now completed
  - Seb Coe visiting Devon on 22<sup>nd</sup> September
- **LAA**
  - Progress being made on Economy and Environmental outcomes
  - Equality Impact Needs Assessment is underway for Economy theme
  - Liaison with HCA
  - Next meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September

- **Worklessness**

- Forum still meeting regularly
- Focus both on local level and strategic
- Future Jobs Fund decision due on 10<sup>th</sup> September
- People with learning disabilities are not included in Future Jobs Fund – so there will be extra work going on to support these people into employment

- **Infrastructure**

- Karime to chair a meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September to discuss Employment Space Strategy, ICT Strategy and various transport initiatives.

## **8) Minutes from the last meeting – Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June**

Please send any comments to Lucy ([lucy.gough@devon.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.gough@devon.gov.uk))

## **9) News Round Up from Members**

SK – latest Jobseekers Allowance figures – Devon - 1.3%, Plymouth +2.8%, Torbay +4.0%. But more people flowing off than on in all areas except Plymouth. Vacancies up in all areas which is unusual for this time of year.

AA – SW Regional Loan Fund - waiting for final decision on who will be managing this.

MC – South Hams and West Devon have taken the first steps towards a Joint Action Plan.

MC – Funding package to sustain PACE has been agreed by Plymouth City Council, Cornwall Council and South Hams District Council – project led by Job Centre Plus.

MC – any ideas/suggestions on approaches to the Backing Young Britain brand – please send them through to [Michael.Cozens@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.Cozens@southhams.gov.uk)

IM – Regional Grand Committee being held at County Hall, Exeter on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September with all SW MPs in attendance.

PH – Women Do Business project has received funding from South Devon Coastal LAG and Greater Dartmoor LAG.

PH – Migrant worker support work being undertaken with DCC

PH – Big Lottery funded Home Grown, Community Owned project is now underway with staff recruited.

PH – CCD Conference on 21<sup>st</sup> October with a focus on the changing rural economy – more information and booking details available here:

<http://www.devonrcc.org.uk/downloads/Conference%20flyer.pdf>

GM – Manufacturing sector not yet hit bottom. Also going to be problems of long term unemployed young people flowing through the system.

LC – Hard copies of the Rural Devon Profile are now available. The profile provides a snapshot of Rural Devon and provides the evidence base for the Rural Strategy. If anyone would like copies please email Leanne ([leanne.crawford@devon.gov.uk](mailto:leanne.crawford@devon.gov.uk))

AL – The latest edition of the DES Quarterly Bulletin is now available on the DEP website:

<http://www.devoneconomy.co.uk/images/stories/reports/DES%20Issue%204%20bulletin%20Aug09%20-%20Final.pdf>. We are interested to find out how far this bulletin is distributed – if

you circulate it through your own networks, please let Lucy know ([lucy.gough@devon.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.gough@devon.gov.uk)) roughly how many people you send it to.

AL – A meeting has been held with the RDA to discuss concerns about the management of the RDPE – hopefully these will now be addressed.

**Date of next meeting – Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October at 2pm, venue tbc**