



Devon Economic Partnership Infrastructure Group

Held on Wednesday 18th November 2009, 10am
East Devon Business Centre, Honiton

Present:

Name	Organisation
Karime Hassan (Chair)	East Devon District Council
Allie Clark	Teignbridge District Council
Andrew Lightfoot	DEP Executive Officer
Daniel Bailyes	DEP Project Assistant
Ellen Vernon	North Devon District Council
Gordon Cleaver	Mid Devon District Council
Keri Denton	Devon County Council
Kevin Atkinson	Torbay Council
Michael Cozens	South Hams District Council
Nigel Harrison	East Devon District Council
Philip Oldfield	Exeter City Council
Sean Kearney	Torrige District Council
Tim Beavon	West Devon District Council

Apologies:

Name	Organisation
Andrew Southall	South West Regional Development Agency
Dave Black	Devon County Council
James Wilson	South West Regional Development Agency
Rupert Owen	Plymouth City Council

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved by all. It was also noted that an action agreed at the previous meeting had not yet been followed-up or completed. Keri conveyed Tom Dixon's apologies and a template for the list of priority sites has now been sent to all.

Introduction of Daniel Bailyes

Daniel graduated in the summer from Reading University and is replacing Lucy Gough, who recently moved onto her next assignment on the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). He will be working for the DEP (based at the RDA) until 31 March 2010. His placement is organised by Exeter University as part of the Graduate Business Partnership (GBP).

1. Devon Employment Space Strategy (DESS) Update and Priorities

Regarding the database / list of sites it was agreed that each of the parties involved would complete their own list of priority sites and then return to Tom.

Action (All): Complete list of priority sites / ranking and return to Tom by the end of November.

There was discussion concerning the way this should be done – whether by spreadsheet or online. It was decided that an online approach, as originally envisaged, would be the preferred option so that lists could be amended with ease in response to changing circumstances.

Action (Keri): Will contact Tom and arrange with him to set-up the online list with password protection.

Moreover, Karime Hassan set out the nature of the sites to be listed. The list encompasses a strategic view across Devon and therefore ought to include those sites that may not even yet be considered viable (for whatever reason).

Andrew Lightfoot agreed with this strategic approach while maintaining dialogue with both Plymouth and Torbay.

Karime reported that we are ready to go with the final draft of the DESS as Tim Jones decided that no changes needed to be made. Philip, however, wanted a paragraph or two added to address the perception that provision is not in short supply across the Exeter Growth Point.

Action (Tom): To complete the amendment requested and place the DESS on the DEP website.

It was agreed that Karime should have authority to sign off documents such as DESS on behalf of this group.

2. ICT Strategy Update

Keri Denton reported that headway is being made in terms of connectivity and that DCC has made good progress in developing the Wider Area Network (WAN). There may also be opportunity to extend WAN further.

Action (Keri Denton): To get in contact with Sean Kearney about opportunities to extend WAN in Torridge.

The Devon Renaissance survey of 'Not Spots' in Devon has been slow, that in the end we should end up with a very clear understanding of the issues, technological solutions and the impact of any actions taken. Ellen Vernon pointed out that many businesses will be overlooked as a result of the datasets currently in use.

Action (Keri Denton): Liaise with Devon Renaissance to prevent this from happening.

In terms of capability, Keri reported that ICT training is still being provided in key sectors and more than 150 businesses have received advice on their use of the internet for trade.

Referring to content, Keri expressed frustration with the tourism and food and drink sector that has failed to keep websites up-to-date once the initial training and set-up has been done.

3. Transportation Initiatives

Andrew Lightfoot reported on behalf of Dave Black. The Sherford and Langage consultation is out regarding work on the A38. Work at Axminster will also hopefully be completed soon in order to increase service to the Waterloo line. Finally, Dave has begun to initiate conversations on the next local transport plan.

4. Update on the Devon Economic Strategy (DES)

The next issue of the bulletin will be published next week with updates on the work of the partnership.

Action (All): If there are any articles that can be contributed before publication could they be sent to Daniel please.

5. Review of the Devon Economic Partnership

Andrew reported that RDA funding for all SEPs (Strategic Economic Partnerships) will soon be coming to an end – a review of SEPs is taking place in response to the current economic climate and the conclusions of the Sub-National Review. A report is due to be presented to their board in the new-year.

The current administration at DCC is also taking a new approach to partnerships. Cllr Will Mumford has established a new economic board to advise him on special planning and

economic issues. The point was made that Devon covers a very large geographical area and that the differences within Devon need to be embraced. To that end there was a suggestion that the proposed composition of the current board would not work.

The Future of economic partnerships is up for debate. The point was made though that the DEP is wider than DCC. Andrew brought to the attention of the group Productive Skills for Devon (PSfD) as a model of how we could work in the future irrespective of the outcome of the review of the DEP. PSfD brings many stakeholders together with the DEP providing funding for research, organisational support and a forum for discussion while also initiating some work. PSfD has worked well for the last 4-5 years.

6. Update from Partners

Kevin, Torbay

Would like a definitive statement of the purpose of this group. Andrew gave a brief description – that the Infrastructure group looked at the actions for implementation of priority A of the DES covering three elements (DESS, ICT and Transportation). This group provides integration and forward planning / thinking.

Action (Andrew): To put together a few paragraphs defining the work of the Infrastructure Group.

Kevin also wanted to know whether this group would decide upon the priority sites from the collated list. At the next meeting of this group resources will be discussed and priorities evaluated. There were issues over whether individual members of the group would be able to command the authority to do so. It was suggested that advice be taken from above.

Sean, Torridge

The recession has hit the area hard, but rental incomes are increasing. He also reported that incubation and knowledge sectors were struggling, and they are the very people we are trying to support.

Ellen, North Devon

- Large manufacturing has begun to recover
- They were unsuccessful in their CABA bid – St. Ives and Plymouth were awarded it. Philip suggested the possibility of a combined coastal bid with relevant partners to improve chances of success.
- Steve Pitcher is now Chief Executive at North Devon + for two years, hopefully making it more robust.
- Finally, the ferry crossing between Ilfracombe and Swansea has been approved, to start in Spring 2010.

Issues of personal interests were raised: a register of interests might be necessary if it was felt that the DEP was having an influence on development priorities.

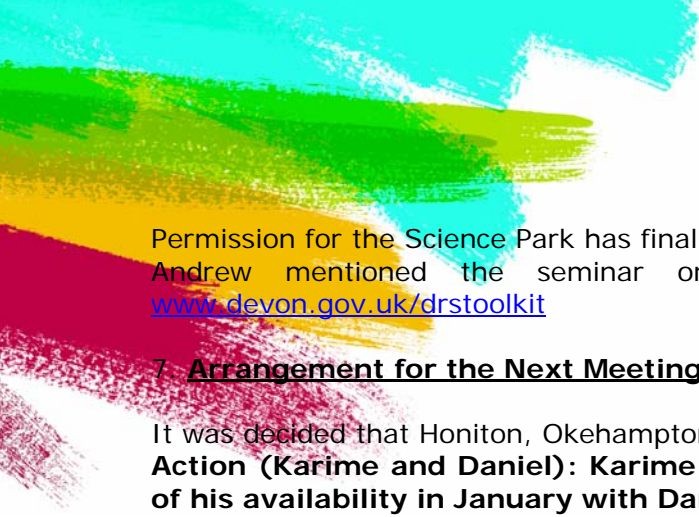
Michael, South Hams

Brought to the attention of the meeting the campaign against the increased business rates which could lead to some businesses going out of business. The petition has been accepted by number 10.

Gordon, Mid Devon

Has gone from economic development being scrapped three years ago to it now being top of the agenda of the Strategic Plan. Next year he will also have some money to contribute.

Karime, East Devon



Permission for the Science Park has finally been granted, and road works will begin next April. Andrew mentioned the seminar on the community facilities toolkit, please see www.devon.gov.uk/drstoolkit

7 Arrangement for the Next Meeting

It was decided that Honiton, Okehampton or Exeter would be ideal venues for future meetings.
Action (Karime and Daniel): Karime will ask his Secretary to provide dates by email of his availability in January with Daniel to coordinate. Daniel also to book the venue.
Kevin suggested procurement as one topic for discussion, plus s.106 agreements and liaison with HCA.