

Devon Economic Partnership Infrastructure Group

Held on Monday 22nd March 2010, 2pm
Darts Farm, Topsham

Present:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Organisation</u> |
|------------------------|---|
| Karime Hassan (Chair) | East Devon District Council |
| Andrew Lightfoot | Devon Economic Partnership / Devon County Council |
| Daniel Bailyes | Devon Economic Partnership |
| Ellen Vernon | North Devon Council |
| Gordon Cleaver | Mid Devon District Council |
| Lee Bray | South Hams District Council |
| Maureen Gori-De-Murden | Exeter City Council |
| Tim Beavon | West Devon District Council |

Apologies:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Organisation</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Allie Clark | Teignbridge District Council |
| Keri Denton | Devon County Council |
| Mary Ridgway | Devon Affordable Housing Coordinator |
| Sean Kearney | Torrige District Council |
| Tom Dixon | Devon County Council |

1. Welcome / Introductions

Karime thanked the group for attending, and specifically welcomed Lee who was attending for the first time.

Lee introduced himself and thanked Karime for his welcome. Lee will be combining both spatial planning and economic development in his role, so will be a useful link between the two, and covering West Devon as well as the South Hams.

2. Employment Space Strategy

a. Delivery Plans

Karime began by updating partners on progress made to date. The strategy is complete, and the Districts are in the process of producing their delivery plans. This work is currently at various stages of completion.



To provide context, Karime also explained the approach this work should take and how it fits into the interests of the Devon Economic Partnership:

- Ordinarily, the role of the public sector in employment space is non-interventionist (except in regulatory capacities). However, there is a need, in times of market failure, where there is an economic development need identified, for the public sector to intervene.
- Where these sites are identified it is important to identify whether these sites are ready to be delivered in the short term (0-5 years) or whether it remains aspiration in the longer term. The production of the Delivery Plans in this is important, as it begins the process of evaluating sites and their viability.
- It's also important to identify the actions that need to be taken to move a site forward. This may be securing funding from the local authorities, or by investing officer time.

Karime tabled a template used for identifying sites in East Devon. This was more comprehensive than the template used for the HCA work. It was agreed that each District would use the latter to identify all sites, including mixed use, and the former for those where public sector intervention was required and were deemed priorities.

The template is adaptable and open to change. It was suggested that two extra columns be added: 'Timeline' e.g. 0-5 years, 5-10 years, and the 'Intervention Required'.

Mixed use sites are also fine to be included.

Action (All): Complete the template and return to Daniel by 19 April. This will then feed into the Single Conversation.

b. Managed Workspace Strategy

A written update on managed workspace was provided by Keri for meeting, as detailed below:

- Phase one of the research has now been signed off by DCC. This indicated the demand for managed workspace across Devon from a 'data' view point and also a property agent view point.
- The analysis has pin pointed 16 towns for phase 2 where we have just kicked off a more in-depth study.
- Red C have been in contact with each of the EDOs as part of this phase 2 piece of work where there is a town in their patch and ECC / PCC / TDA have all be kept informed of the study.
- Kevin Atkinson has been in touch and we have suggested he might like to add to the research and do the same in Torbay.
- The 16 towns are:



Axminster
Barnstable
Cullopmton
Dawlish
Exmouth
Honiton
Ilfracombe
Ivybridge
Newton Abbot
Ottery St. Mary
Seaton
Sidmouth
Tavistock
Teignmouth
Tiverton
Totnes

- Phase 2 will include a business survey and this is now underway. Two prongs – below the radar businesses based at home, freelancers and remote workers – using networks like the Home based businesses and also to above the radar using chambers of commerce, FSB, Prince’s trust.
- Business survey will seek to identify specific issues over needs, costs, process, the essentials in any facility e.g. on site business support, ICT connections, crèche etc, likelihood of a business to relocate, impact on their business performance etc, and the sort of ‘joint facilities’ they might welcome e.g. workspace running alongside a training facility...
- Phase three – and running parallel in part to phase 2 is also an assessment and study of other models and facilities in operation that might be applied to the Devon scenario and this will include governance arrangements, income generation, types of uses.
- Study will conclude in mid April and desire is to hold a dissemination event.
- Plans forging ahead to deliver libraries with workspace in Newton Abbot and Cullopmton which will be useful test beds for additional hubs / facilities going forward. Currently at specification phase.

A presentation will be made at the next meeting.

3. ICT Infrastructure

Andrew brought to the attention of the group the announcement made today from Gordon Brown on Next Generation Access (NGA).

More information can be found on the note provided by Keri for the meeting, which is copied below:

- Currently developing a strategy for DCC's investment in connectivity across Devon, including business animation and aggregating demand; focus on not spots / slow spots and the business benefits / impact that would be derived from any investment made by us.
- Outcome of the joint application with Somerset County Council made to the RDA under the RDPE programme will be known in April. Will allow six pilot communities along the two counties' borders to test different technologies, approaches and governance arrangements. One pilot would include a managed workspace / hub facility.
- Responding to the Government's NGA (Next Generation Access Fund) consultation and pushing hard for a sub-regional delivery mechanism, focus on hard to reach areas first (i.e. rural v semi-urban) and not just focusing on the fibre but inclusive of other technologies too. Other issues over not stymieing private sector investment, community ownership models and the definition of NGA are also being responded to. RDA are responding and DCC / Connecting SW group are supporting this response too.
- Helpful reports recently published by DEFRA – Analysis Mason on the likelihood of NGA across the UK and the areas at risk of not receiving NGA – needless to say Devon / SW at a disadvantage. RDA commissioned a similar study to cover the business impact and drill down into the SW – similar findings.
- Continuing to deliver a website health check service to SMEs, proven popular and helpful to tourism and food and drink businesses and proposal is to extend into other sectors.
- Supporting the Digital mentor scheme operating under Cosmic in the Blackdown Hills and this is proving effective in stimulating demand and up skilling people on ICT.


There was also comment made that partners could be kept better updated on developments in this area. For example, the level and type of cabling provided in some areas.

A service box near Collumpton for internet cables was also mentioned, which was previously unknown to interested parties. Information on this would be helpful for some.

Action: To gather more information, and focus discussion at the next meeting

4. Round-up

- Lee suggested a joint meeting take place between economic and planning officers to improve joined up thinking. This suggestion was welcomed by Karime and the group;
- Andrew reported the work that the Productive Skills for Devon have commissioned on worklessness and the skills gaps. Feedback on this will be given to the group;

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- Andrew also reported that the revamping of the Devon Economic Partnership (DEP) would be taking place soon – with details to be disseminated once agreed.
 - Devon Renaissance to commence another business survey.

Next Meeting

Friday 23 April, 10-12 (Venue to be confirmed)