

Devon Economic Partnership PS4D Research Steering Group

**Held on Monday 18th January 2010, 2pm
SLIM Offices, St. Lukes Campus, Exeter**

Present:

Name	Organisation
Andrew Lightfoot (Chair)	Devon County Council / Devon Economic Partnership
Andrew Dean	SLIM
Ben Neild	SLIM
Chris Evans	SLIM
Daniel Bailyes	Devon Economic Partnership
Deborah Passmore	Torbay Council
Graham Morris	Plymouth Employment and Skills Board
Peter Wills	Cornwall Council
Richard Ball	Exeter City Council
Sophie Ruggieri	Devon County Council
Steve Pitcher	North Devon +

Welcome / Introductions

Andrew Lightfoot thanked those present for coming and SLIM for hosting the meeting. Introductions were made around the table.

Background

Andrew Lightfoot explained the background behind the meeting in order to provide some context. In response to an invitation to submit bids for PS4D Reward Grant money, a number of proposals were received from LESBs in Devon and also from SLIM. The group assessing the proposals wanted to see greater co-operation between them and a greater reflection of PS4D priorities. PS4D commissioned SLIM to discuss with partners and develop a more coherent approach.

SLIM were commissioned because of the work they are currently engaged in on a regional level. The task would be to find our combined objectives for the work and to determine its financial implications.

To view more information on the context / background of the meeting, please read section 1 in SLIM's report on its findings and discussions thus far. This can be found on the Devon Economy website by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.devoneconomy.co.uk/reward-grant-documents-revenue>

Andrew also reported that the £50k allocated by PS4D for this work is not yet available as the government have yet to sign the money off. No reasons have been given for the delay and the issue has been reported to the Chief Executive for follow-up. Andrew hopes to receive final confirmation soon. All the money from the revenue reward grant stream has been allocated and is simply awaiting the green light to go ahead.

A group met on Friday to discuss proposals for capital funding and were encouraged by some exciting bids.

Regional Skills Priorities

Chris gave the background to the Regional Priorities Statement which had just been circulated for comment. She had a meeting with LESBs in early December to produce sub-regional reports for the Regional Employment and Skills Analysis, and a matrix summarising the level of data being provided was about to be circulated. On the basis of this LESBs would suggest what further detail they would like.

General Discussion

Plymouth ESB (Graham)

Each sub-regional area recognises that distinct differences exist between them. The big fear of ESBs, therefore, is that yet another top-down approach determining regional priorities will be adopted that simply does not fit individual ESB areas.

The biggest priority for the Plymouth ESB is to provide sufficient evidence to inform a statement of local priorities that simply cannot be ignored. Plymouth ESB is anxious to begin work and will tackle the issue on two fronts:

- Firstly, by commissioning research into a supply and demand analysis of skills in priority sectors in Plymouth;
- Secondly, by commissioning SLIM to provide clear evidence leading to the identification of priority sectors.

Torbay (Deborah)

Through research would like information that would inform work in Torbay.

Cornwall (Peter)

Has not been involved in this process previously and will observe and report back to those concerned in Cornwall.

Exeter (Richard)

Richard made two points:

- Firstly, he would like to know what will come out of this work and the level of detail it will go into;
- Secondly, he would be willing to begin the paper work to get this process moving even without final confirmation of the reward grant money from government.

North Devon + (Steve)

The ESB in North Devon has not yet held its first meeting, partly because it first waited to discuss the outcome of this meeting.

Local Economic Assessment (Sophie)

Would like to see how this research could feed into the Local Economic Assessment (LEA) for Devon.

Section 3 of SLIM's Report – Priorities Identified to Date

The question under discussion concerned the level of detail required by the LESBs. Sophie suggested that study take place around key developments. This would mean a focus on construction in Exeter and therefore it would be a short-term approach (Ben).

Andrew Lightfoot argued that it would be helpful for each ESB to take the regional statement and to say which are relevant or not as a framework for discussion.

Moreover, Andrew asked whether the data could include a monitoring exercise for delivery plans. This would reduce the budget available for the rest of the work (Ben) and would not apply to Plymouth (Graham).

Analytical Process

Andrew suggested that the starting point ought to be current priorities. These priorities can then be shifted / refined as new evidence feeds in.

Moreover, how can the group achieve the right balance between strategic thinking whilst keeping an eye on the expectations of individual ESBs? PS4D would play a role in this in providing a forum.

Outputs

Richard requested that the outputs expected from the proposal be expanded to make it easier to see what partners could expect to get.

Action (Ben): To try and articulate more precisely the outputs provided so that partners can take the information to their boards for discussion.

Contractual Arrangements

Plymouth will make a separate contractual arrangement from everyone else.

Steering Arrangements

It was decided that Sophie's equivalents from Plymouth and Torbay ought to be invited to the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

There will be email contact following circulation of the sub-regional data matrix and Ben's revised statement on outputs.

It was decided that a meeting ought to be arranged for 11:30 on Friday 12 February. This will be before the PS4D meeting that afternoon at Bicton.

Action (Daniel): To arrange room booking.

A further meeting would take place at the end of February / beginning of March.

Action (Daniel): To arrange a suitable date and venue by email.