

City of York Council

Minutes

MEETING	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
DATE	25 SEPTEMBER 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS STEVE GALLOWAY (CHAIR), KIRK, ALEXANDER, SCOTT, TAYLOR, FRASER (SUBSTITUTE) AND HUDSON (SUBSTITUTE) JEZ WILLARD (RETAIL SECTOR), MR LEN CRUDDAS (CHAMBER OF COMMERCE), MR MIKE GALLOWAY (EDUCATION/LIFELONG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP), PROF TONY ROBARDS (UNIVERSITY OF YORK) AND JULIE HUTTON (YORKSHIRE FORWARD)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR CEREDIG JAMIESON-BALL, COUNCILLOR JANET LOOKER, MR ANDREW SCOTT (FIRST STOP YORK TOURISM PARTNERSHIP), MR BRIAN ANDERSON (TRADES UNIONS), MR KEVIN MOSS (FINANCE SECTOR) AND MR MARK SESSIONS (MANUFACTURING SECTOR)

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

Cllr Fraser declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 6 Report of the Future York Group (minute 11 refers) as a member of the retired section of Unison and the TGWU.

Cllr Kirk declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 7 Development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy (minute 12 refers) as an employee of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

8. MINUTES

RESOLVED : That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2007 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

10. PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES

Members considered a report which briefed board members on issues and progress on key areas of economic development activity in the past six months, since the previous update in March.

Members received updates on the following areas:

- Tourism
- Rail related issues
- Science City York (SCY), including SCY organisational structure going forward, Northern Way Bid, BA Festival of Science 2007, National Science Cities Development Group, and Skills Development and STEM
- York Training Centre
- City Centre Partnership Limited
- Future Prospects
- York Business Survey

The following points were raised:

- The methodology used for ascertaining the age profile of visitors to York
- The nomination of contractors for Network Rail and the new service provider Grand Central
- The two year action plan for the York Training Centre

Annexes to the report gave details of performance indicator information in relation to business performance, business confidence, employment balance, improved business performance, unemployment in York, and key visitor trends.

Further information was distributed to Members entitled "York – The thriving City" detailing

- performance indicators regarding unemployment rates, number of new businesses, Gross Weekly pay for all full-time workers, percentage of York residents of working age achieving a first full level 2 qualification
- Local Area Agreement Measures relating to educational issues, earnings, benefit levels, and tourism

Members thanked officers for the encouraging report.

RESOLVED : That the report be endorsed and the Board's input be noted.

REASON : To help shape the effectiveness of future action.

11. REPORT OF THE FUTURE YORK GROUP

Members considered an information report which briefed the Board on the final report of the Future York Group and sought its views on its main findings. It detailed the following four recommendations directly concerning the board:

P1: It is essential that City of York Council re-invigorate the role and membership of its partnerships, to ensure that they are effective in delivering the Future York Vision and the oversight of economic development and place shaping activities. We recommend to businesses and business organisations in the city that they commit themselves to support the new partnership and consultation arrangements, and actively participate in them.

P2: We recommend that City of York Council review the terms of reference, membership, and working arrangements of the Economic Development Partnership Group, to re-form the group to give strategic leadership and direction to the city's economic development activities.

P3: We recommend that City of York Council strengthen the business representation on the partnership and on the re-formed Economic Development Partnership Board to ensure informed and effective analysis and decision making.

P4: We recommend that City of York Council review how best the skills and training agenda can be linked into the work of the Economic Development Partnership Board.

The annex to the report detailed the response to the Future York Group report. Officers updated that this was a work-in-progress.

In connection to Recommendation 1, Members discussed the following:

- Future of this board in terms of membership
- Whether an independent Chair would be appropriate
- The need for the board to be more representative of the business community
- The need for trade union representative involvement
- The need for greater cohesion between different organisations in the city
- Input of the private sector
- What the group is trying to achieve and the outcome of this having an input into the decision on the composition of the group

Members requested that officers circulate prior to the next meeting proposals for the composition of this board.

RESOLVED : (i) That the Boards comments above be noted;
 (ii) That proposals for a revised membership of this board be circulated to all Members prior to the next meeting, and that it be considered at the next meeting of this board.

REASON : To help shape the effectiveness of future action.

12. DEVELOPMENT OF AN ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

Members considered a report which provided information regarding the developing anti-poverty strategy and the response it received at the Without Walls Partnership at its meeting on 18 July 2007. Members were requested to agree the proposed steps suggested for implementation by

the Economic Development Unit to help reduce poverty. In addition Members were requested to endorse the proposed performance indicators that the Economic Development Unit could add to those of other partners as a means of measuring the progress of anti-poverty actions.

The proposals and measures, when added to those from partners, would form an action plan to support the delivery of the developing Anti-Poverty Strategy. This draft strategy was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The report presented six proposed actions and five proposed measures as detailed in paragraphs 26 & 27 of the report for endorsement by members.

Members discussed the promotion of lifelong learning, re-skilling, skills and inclusion, and the requirement for information regarding those who have been affected by job losses in York e.g. Nestle.

RESOLVED : (i) That the comments of the board be noted;
 (ii) That the six proposed actions and five proposed measures be endorsed.

REASON : To help shape the effectiveness of future action and make a positive input into the Anti-Poverty strategy.

13. DEVELOPMENT OF A SKILLS STRATEGY FOR YORK

Members considered a report which provided interim information on the development of an adult skills strategy for York within the context of the Community Strategy (the Without Walls learning vision). It also reviewed the recommendations relating to the development of skills in the Future York Group Report, and explained that work is on-going to identify potential gaps between the strategies. The report detailed the learning vision for the City of York, details of York's Adult Learning and Skills Strategy 2007 – 2010. It also detailed a number of specific skill recommendations made in the Future York Group report in relation to the Council working with partners, these being:

- Increasing Further and Higher Education opportunities relevant to increasing economic activity.
- Increasing the proportion of the workforce with technical skills and the development of graduate placements (particular focus on the role of Science City York).
- Proactively develop an entrepreneurial workforce.
- Engage fully with local business.

Members discussed issues related to the low self-employment rate, reacting to changes in the economy, the difference between training schemes and what employers want from potential employees, and the importance of input from schools.

RESOLVED : That the Boards comments as detailed above be noted.

REASON : To help shape the effectiveness of future action.

Cllr SF Galloway

CHAIR

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 7.20 pm.