
MEETING	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD
DATE	TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2006
PRESENT:	COUNCILLORS S F GALLOWAY (Chair), BLANCHARD, D'AGORNE, KIRK, MERRETT AND WALLER (Substitute for Cllr Jamieson-Ball) LEN CRUDDAS – CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PROF T ROBARDS – UNIVERSITY OF YORK ANDREW SCOTT – FIRST STOP YORK TOURISM
APOLOGIES:	COUNCILLOR JAMIESON-BALL KEVIN MOSS – NORWICH UNION MARK SESSIONS – MANUFACTURING SECTOR

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal non-prejudicial interests were declared: Councillor D'Agorne is employed by York College; Cllr Waller is employed by GNER and Cllr Blanchard is a member and financial sponsor of the Chamber of Commerce.

16. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

17. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 21 June and 27 September 2005 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

18. MEMBERSHIP

The Chair reported that Stuart Kay and Brian Littlejohn, members of the Board, would be unable to continue their membership owing to work commitments. It was reported that Kevin Moss from Norwich Union would be replacing Stuart Kay as the finance sector representative.

RESOLVED: That Brian Littlejohn and Stuart Kay be thanked for all their work whilst members of the Economic Development Board, with particular acknowledgement of the work of Brian Littlejohn through chairing the City Centre Partnership Board and providing leadership within the retail sector.

19. WITHOUT WALLS “THRIVING CITY” THEME – REVISED HIGH LEVEL MEASURES

This report put forward proposals for new high level performance indicators for the Board to consider in its lead role for the Thriving City Theme. This followed the desire to identify more relevant high level measures within the Thriving City Theme of the Community Plan, as identified by the Without Walls Board and at an earlier Economic Board meeting.

It was reported that the current set of high level measures had been agreed when the Community Plan was produced in 2004. Officers were now considering revised and more appropriate measures in conjunction with recent Audit Commission guidance on possible economic development indicators.

The following points were made:

- There was a need to keep the existing measure relating to proportion of people of working age in employment
- Officers asked to consider possible measures relating to skills attainment levels and the retention of graduates, and the adverse impact of fuel prices on poverty and on the local economy
- Affordability of housing was also an issue for employers

Officers confirmed that they would examine

- Whether the ratio of average earnings to average house prices was used as a measure elsewhere and the possibility of using this for York
- In relation to proposal “8ii) Skills and attainment levels within the workforce” the possibility of including vocational training in this measure
- The inclusion of possible measures relating to sustainability, reducing the eco footprint and its effect on businesses.
- The UK Cities report prepared by the ODPM which was highly relevant and would be used to support the measures

RESOLVED:

	That the Board support the revised high level measures listed in the report for submission to the Without Walls Board subject to the addition of the following measure and Officers consideration of the further points raised above
--	--

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proportion of people of working age in employment. |
|--|--|

20. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2006/07

The Board considered a report and draft Economic Development programme, which set out key issues, priorities and actions for 2006/07.

It was explained that the wider strategic framework for the Council's economic development programme was provided by the "Thriving City" theme within the Community Plan for 2004-2014 for which the Economic Development Board had lead responsibility.

The following issues were raised at the meeting:

- Although the Council had the York Eco Depot (a model sustainable depot) there was nothing in the programme to encourage other employers to incorporate renewable energy sources into their businesses.
- Organisations who developed sustainable buildings receive NDR rebates
- Skills gap relating to technical expertise in installing energy saving equipment
- Under key actions 1-5 it was agreed to include a PI relating to Number of jobs going to York residents
- Survey of workforce generally
- Use of imported workforce
- Measure of emigration

RESOLVED:

	That the Economic Development Programme for 2006/07 be approved subject to the addition of the following:
•	Under key actions 1-5 the inclusion of a PI relating to Number of jobs going to York residents

21. YORKSHIRE FORWARD/CITY OF YORK COUNCIL RELATIONSHIP

Members considered a report which asked for comments and advice on the key issues and opportunities that might be pursued with Tim Riordan, the new Chief Executive of Yorkshire Forward. Tim had written to David Atkinson expressing his desire to explore how the Council and Yorkshire Forward could work more closely together in taking forward the revised Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

Officers confirmed that the context for this dialogue with Yorkshire Forward was the revised Regional Economic Strategy and the focus on "places" contained within it. Yorkshire Forward's intention, through joint working, was to articulate clearly what the RES meant for each local authority area.

Members understand that Yorkshire Forward were short of North Yorkshire members on the Board so any comments or advice would be useful.

The following points were made:

- Premises and development land – ties in with others in the list but some outside our area
- Image – what can we do to make the city more special
- An important issue for York and its future prosperity was transport links to Leeds/Bradford Airport etc
- Need for the region to adopt the eco-footprint principle and engage with Science Cities
- A commitment to attending meetings
- Require investment in Cities success arising out of the UK Cities report
- Questions regarding the Authority's procurement policy and the opportunity to explore the potential to alert local businesses to tendering/procurement opportunities offered by the Council

RESOLVED:

i)	That the issues and areas of activity outlined in the report be used as a basis for discussion at the meeting with Tom Riordan, Chief Executive, Yorkshire Forward
ii)	That Officers explore options for alerting local businesses tendering/procurement opportunities through the Councils Procurement Policy.

22. YORK CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Board considered a report which reviewed the current status of Christmas Lights in York city centre and provided options on ways forward for 2006 and the future. The report had been produced in conjunction with the Christmas Lights Group that had overseen the provision of lights in past years.

Officers confirmed that it was becoming increasingly difficult each year to obtain funding for the Christmas Lights, which were seen as important in providing the city centre with a festive atmosphere at a time of year when retailers expected their highest turnover levels.

Members considered the following options

- A Funding the existing cross street lighting through sponsorship campaign
- B Traditional cross street lighting, through a new trader-led approach with the lights handed over to the traders
- C A single, innovative lighting installation timed for Christmas
- D Combining B and C

- E No lights and no special lighting installation
- F Other lighting alternatives that would still provide Christmas decoration (to include with any of the above)

The following points were made:

- There was no pattern to the way in which other local authorities funded their Christmas lights.
- Lack of funds may result in the City being unable to erect the cross street lighting in Coney Street.
- It is possible through a street by street approach to ask traders for support for the erection of the cross street lighting or the appointment of Champions for each street
- The Chamber of Commerce has insufficient resources to support the provision of lights as the City was only a small part of the geographical area covered by the Chamber
- There was a need for the City Centre Partnership to get involved and lead on future fund raising for the provision of Christmas lights (though the Board had resolved not to do this)
- Need to obtain the support of the Evening Press

RESOLVED:

i)	That Officers explore option C to provide a single, innovative light installation timed for Christmas.
ii)	That retailers through the current Christmas Lights Group be advised of the unit costs involved in the installation of cross street lighting for Christmas 2006 on a street by street basis and that they be offered the opportunity to fund and erect the lights themselves.

23. **PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES**

Consideration was given to the report on key areas of the Economic Development Programme where there had been significant progress or new developments since the last meeting in September. Areas covered included Science City York, Heslington East Inquiry, Tourism, Future Prospects, City Centre Partnership and the regional agenda.

Members commented that the cold spring and late Easter may have had an effect on York visitor numbers and attendance at visitor attractions but that it was too early to confirm details. It was reported that there were to be new attractions in York during the summer including the Flying Scotsman Story at the Railway Museum and a new archaeological attraction, "Dig" which it was hoped would help increase visitor numbers.

Science City York

An update on funding secured to implement enhancement of Science City activity in York and the region over the next four years. Updates also on

key performance targets, progress on the development of an Innovation 'road map' for Key Cities and the co-ordination of on going national policy development priorities for the six National Science Cities. A review of skills requirements by Science City York employers had been undertaken, which would influence activity in 2006/07.

Heslington East Inquiry

It was reported that the planning application relating to the expansion of the University had been called to a public inquiry, which was due to start in late April. Consultants had been appointed to put forward Science City York's endorsement of the University's expansion plans.

Tourism

It was noted that work was advancing on tourism delivery structures with the development of six Area Tourism Partnerships (ATP's), in the region the one for York being based on the First Stop York tourism partnership. The Station Visitor Information Centre (VIC) refurbishment had been completed and work on a feasibility study for a new city centre facility was on target for the end of April. Details had been received of increasing visitor numbers to York over the Christmas 2005 period and of a series of public art installations, which had boosted the York economy. There had been progress on the development of 16 interpretive panels around the City Walls and an 18% increase in visits to attractions over the Residents First Weekend during 28-29 January 2006. Details were also given of important marketing initiatives undertaken by the York Tourism Bureau and details of hotel occupancy figures and visits to attractions were set out in Annexes to the report.

Future Prospects

It was noted that Future Prospects had produced their update for the first six months of activity in the current financial year giving details of contacts etc.

In answer to Members questions Officers agreed to check the level of out reach work and as to what effect this had on the figures.

City Centre Partnership

It was noted that following the appointment of the new Chief Executive in October 2005 it was hoped to have the Business Plan in place by the end of March 2006.

Regional Agenda

Leeds City Region

It was reported that governance issues were currently being debated at Chief Executive and Leader level.

Key Cities

It was reported that this concept had now been revised within the new Regional Economic Strategy to focus more on a wider group of "major urban centres" and to place more emphasis on the City Region approach.

RESOLVED:

	That the up dates on the above key areas of the Economic Development Programme are noted.
--	---

S F GALLOWAY
CHAIR

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 7.35 pm.