
MEETING	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
DATE	19 JUNE 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS STEVE GALLOWAY (CHAIR), JAMIESON-BALL (VICE-CHAIR), KIRK, ALEXANDER, GILLIES, LOOKER, SCOTT AND TAYLOR MR ANDREW SCOTT (FIRST STOP YORK TOURISM PARTNERSHIP), PROF TONY ROBARDS (UNIVERSITY OF YORK) AND JULIE HUTTON (YORKSHIRE FORWARD)
APOLOGIES	JEZ WILLARD (RETAIL SECTOR), MR BRIAN ANDERSON (TRADES UNIONS), MR LEN CRUDDAS (CHAMBER OF COMMERCE), MR MIKE GALLOWAY (EDUCATION/LIFELONG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP), MR KEVIN MOSS (FINANCE SECTOR) AND MR MARK SESSIONS (MANUFACTURING SECTOR)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Looker declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 6 (Research Findings on the Evening Economy) as she was an unpaid, voluntary secretary to the Theatre Royal.

Councillor Scott declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 6 (Research Findings on the Evening Economy) as he was the Children's Champion.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 13 March 2007 be approved and signed as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

4. REPORT OF THE FUTURE YORK GROUP

Members considered a report which sought to brief the Board on the final report of the Future York Group and sought views on its main findings.

The Future York Group was commissioned by the City of York Council to undertake an independent strategic review of the local economy, following a series of announcements regarding job losses in the City. This authoritative report would provide the framework for future actions to be undertaken by the City of York Council and partners with regard to promoting the economic well-being of the City. Their final report was launched on 12th June when it was handed over to the City of York Council at a public event at the Mansion House. The Council had yet to consider the report formally and there was, therefore, no firm commitment from the Council to the recommendations set out in the report. The views of the Board were welcomed on the findings and conclusions of the Future York Group.

The following points were made:

- The economic future of York was good but it could not afford to become complacent. There was much opportunity for the economy to be strengthened further
- The need to develop a clear vision for the future of the City
- The need for a clear master plan about the direction the City should take
- The need to work together and to make sure that consultation includes everyone
- The need for housing and education to support workforce and business needs
- There was a need to emphasise the technological credentials of the City which is much more than a visitor destination
- Science City had now matured and some of the businesses were looking to grow and move on; there needed to be compelling reasons why they should stay in York including the availability of suitable premises and development land
- The report raised questions of sustainability due to the scale of the potential growth. This would need to be addressed
- The need to support entrepreneurship
- The need for better access to an airport
- The decline in the manufacturing base and the expansion of the University may bring about a two tier economy unless local people were given the skills to compete for the jobs being created
- The importance of planning for the future. The timing of the report is opportune bearing in mind the amount of brownfield land now available
- York's broadband capacity is a major asset which needs to be promoted
- York needs to be a lifelong learning City ensuring that its workforce skills are continually updated
- The report lacked information about economic changes in the sub-region and its potential impact on York

- The fact that it is a hugely expensive and ambitious programme if all recommendations were taken forward and this needs to be borne in mind

RESOLVED: That the Future York Group report be noted and endorsed and that the above views be noted in the Council's consideration of the report

REASON: To help shape the effectiveness of future action

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE EVENING ECONOMY IN YORK

Members considered a report which sought to brief the Board on research on the evening economy and the experience of York city centre in the evening, undertaken in association with the First Stop York Product Development Group. Views were sought on the draft vision and action plan prior to formal consideration by the City of York Council.

The research described in the report provides a potential way forward for developing a vision for the York evening economy. It suggests that the correct "steer" for the York evening economy was towards a more inclusive evening experience with a more exciting and diverse range of evening activities, a higher amenity value and a higher perception of safety in the city centre. The research also highlighted the need for co-ordination of activity in the evening economy to allow for greater communication and cooperation between the stakeholders involved including retail, hospitality, entertainment, accommodation and the local authority.

Key findings of the research, together with a draft vision and action plan to stimulate the evening economy in York were set out in the report. These had yet to be considered by the City of York Council and the views of the Board were welcomed at this stage as part of the discussion on how best to move forward with the development of the evening economy in York city centre.

The following points were made:

- York's evening economy needed to be enhanced to attract overnight visitors
- York needed to develop an inclusive evening economy
- York's evening economy provides benefit both for tourists and residents. There was a need to develop a clearer vision of future direction
- There was a night time economy forum that was set up due to the changes in the Licensing Laws; this had expanded into a more general forum and could be developed further to incorporate any new plans for the evening economy
- The need to revisit pedestrianisation and determine whether its hours should be extended

- At the present time it was difficult to buy a cup of coffee between 5pm and 7pm in the City Centre. The slack period between these two times needs to be addressed.
- Vans are allowed back into the City Centre after 4pm which is unwelcoming to pedestrians
- The need to 'tease out the details' and work in a joined up way with planning and licensing
- There is an impression that York is 'stuck in a rut' in terms of its evening economy and is not making the most of opportunities
- The need to create a more 'continental' atmosphere within the City
- The need for the evening economy to be more family orientated addressing concerns that the growth of activities requiring alcohol and related licences has perhaps been at the expense of other evening activities
- Museums and other attractions needed to be encouraged to put on more night time events and to include events for families during the evening
- Hotels could provide more information about evening and night time events in York – for example through the possibility of a daily newsletter of events that could be obtained from the Visitor Information Centre or through hotels or by texting a specified number
- The potential of Newgate Market as an entertainment space after trading hours had finished
- The encouragement of retail establishments to stay open later into the evening
- Extension of the hours of the Park and Ride facilities

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the key findings of the research, and the draft proposed action plan for the evening economy in York be noted;
- (ii) That a clear vision for the City's evening economy be defined
- (iii) That the Board support in principle the development with stakeholders of a vibrant, diverse and inclusive evening economy in York;
- (iv) That a further report be presented on a costed action plan to support the development of the evening economy in York city centre.

REASON:

To help shape the effectiveness of future action.

6. CHRISTMAS LIGHTING - PROPOSALS FOR 2007

Members considered a report which updated Members of the Board on a number of options for Christmas Lighting – related activities for 2007, and also reviews other festive activities proposed and committed for this year. The report also highlighted the need for a long term strategy on this issue.

Regarding festive lighting, the following options were presented for consideration by the Economic Development Partnership Board:

- Single Decorative Illumination. This could be in Parliament Street as last year, or another site. Costs depend on what was desired but could range between £20k - £45k.
- City Wide Cross street lighting scheme. On the basis of previous experience, this would cost approximately £40k - £50k. It was understood that this was the favoured option of many retailers.
- 'Best Dressed window' campaign. A competition between retailers to create spectacular Christmas window displays. Minimum costs would apply but it would need a lot of officer time.
- Christmas Tree campaign. Using many of the existing brackets on shop fronts to create a scheme where each shop could display a small tree with white fairy lights. Minimal costs as retailers would buy into the scheme but officer time could be considerable.
- Creative Kids Competition. Engaging with schoolchildren of all ages, the winning designs would be made into Christmas lights and installed around the town for all to see. Costs were approximately £500 per design + installation. Sponsorship could potentially be easier to find due to the nature of this scheme.

The issue of a long term strategy for Christmas lighting also needed to be addressed. It was difficult to switch resources for 2007 from other areas into Christmas Lights as these activities – as well as the Lights themselves – ideally needed a long lead-in period in order to offer the best promotional advantage. Promotional materials highlight tourism events and activities a year or more in advance, so already decisions for 2008 and beyond were needed.

The following points were raised:

- The need to explore a way of finding a permanent solution to the issue of Christmas illuminations, through discussion with the City Centre Partnership on longer term responsibilities
- Christmas events were hugely popular
- The fact that traders had indicated that they were not able to contribute to funds for Christmas illuminations in 2007
- The Council was not in a position to fund the cross street lights but was happy to assist traders over any installation matters they might have
- The Christmas Tree Campaign was the most favoured option and that the emphasis should be on individual trees rather than an additional City centre feature provided by the Council (the St Helen's Tree will continue to be provided)
- The Creative Kids Competition was also favoured and it was noted that the cost was reasonable
- A candlelight festival/celebration was suggested

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Christmas Tree Campaign – using many of the existing brackets on shop fronts to

create a scheme where each shop could display a small tree with white fairy lights was the favoured option and would be organised by the City Council

- (ii) That the City Council Officers facilitate a Creative Kids competition
- (iii) That the Officers discuss with the City Centre Partnership longer term, strategic responsibilities on the provision of Christmas lighting

REASON: To give a direction to Christmas lighting strategy for York for 2007 and provide the basis for a longer term solution

CLLR STEVE GALLOWAY; CHAIR

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