
Economic Development Partnership Board

11th March 2008

Report of the Assistant Director

FUTURE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Summary

1. The report sets out some options for the Board to consider regarding future membership and composition prior to formal approval by the Council.

Background

2. The last meeting of the Board considered a report on the membership and terms of reference of the Economic Development Partnership Board. Following debate at that meeting, there are a number of issues to consider further prior to the Council making any formal changes to its constitution. These are set out below and partners are invited to comment further on these.

Consultation

3. There has been considerable consultation on the Future York Group report and the issue of membership of the Board has been debated at previous meetings. Democratic Services has also been consulted on the potential constitutional effects of any review of the role and composition of the Board.

Options

4. The Economic Development Partnership Board is currently formally constituted as a working group of the Council. Any change to its membership and terms of reference will require an amendment to the Council's constitution as well as the endorsement of the Without Walls Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). This matter was debated fully at the last meeting of the Board and general agreement, in principle, was given to the proposed terms of reference, subject to an amendment to paragraph 2.2b to reflect that the Board did not have the power to ensure action in the allocation of resources by partner organisations.
5. A review of the Council's constitution is underway and will be considering the role of working groups generally. This provides an opportunity to consider the future status of the Board. Board members' views are sought on two possible options for the future of the Economic Development Partnership Board:
 1. Option 1 - the Board remains as a working group of the Council
 2. Option 2 – the Board becomes a partnership body. In this case the Council would nominate representatives to the Partnership Board, and any actions

considered by the Board which require a Council decision would need to be considered separately under the Council's constitution.

6. In both these cases the terms of reference presented to the last Board meeting will need to be re-written to reflect any decision made by the Council in its constitutional review.
7. In addition, there are four options left unresolved from the last meeting which require further consideration by the Board:
 1. The establishment of a wider Economic Development Forum under the Board;
 2. The number of private sector representatives to the Board and how these should be determined;
 3. How best for the Education/Skills sector to be represented on the Board;
 4. Whether the number of councillors should be extended from 3 to 4 to cover all political parties.

Analysis

8. Establishing a wider Business Forum

This was debated at the last meeting and it was proposed that a wider business forum consisting of say 40 to 50 business representatives could meet on a 6 monthly basis to review and support the work of the Board. It is proposed that Officers within the Economic Development Unit work with the Chamber of Commerce on establishing this Business Forum.

9. Private Sector Representatives

There were concerns expressed at the last meeting as to whether 4 business sector representatives were sufficient, whilst recognising the need to limit the total size of the Board. Under the proposal presented at the last meeting, there would be 4 sector representatives (2 from major employers, 2 from smaller enterprises) out of a total of 13. An alternative option would be to increase this to 6 and the views of the Board are requested on this matter. It is proposed to seek the recommendation of the Future York Group on how the business sector places on the Board should be allocated, bearing in mind the above proposal to establish a wider Business Forum.

10. Learning City York Partnership

It was debated at the last meeting of the Board whether the Learning and Skills Council should have a direct nomination to the Board to cover issues related to education, skills and workforce development. An alternative approach would be to seek a representative from the Learning City York Partnership and the views of the Board are requested on this matter.

11. The issue of representation from Elected Members will need to be considered directly by the Council under its constitution, although again it would be helpful to have any views of the Board.
12. It is proposed to complete this outstanding work on the membership and terms of reference for the Board as well as seeking the relevant approval from the Council and endorsement by the Without Walls Local Strategic Partnership so that a

reconstituted Economic Development Partnership Board can commence at the start of the next municipal year (i.e., in time for the next proposed meeting of the Board in June).

Corporate Priorities

13. The work of the Economic Development Partnership Board relates to the following objectives for the Council, the Economic Development Service Plan and the LSP Without Walls initiatives.
 - * The “Thriving City” theme of the WOW Community Plan has the following strategic objective:

“To support the progress and success of York’s existing businesses and to encourage new enterprises in order to maintain a prosperous and flourishing economy that will sustain high employment rates.”
 - * The Economic Development Service Plan sets identifies a number of corporate priorities covering:
 - Increase people’s skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects.
 - Improve the economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimising income differentials.
 - Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city.
 - Improve the way the Council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York.

Implications

14. Financial: There are no implications at this stage. Any significant implications to economic development activity will be the subject of future reports to the Board.
15. Human resources: None
16. Equalities: None
17. Legal: None
18. Crime and Disorder: None
19. Information Technology: None
20. Property: None

Risk Management

21. In compliance with the council’s risk management strategy. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendation

22. That

(i) the Council consider the constitutional issues for reviewing the Economic Development Partnership Board in order that a newly constituted arrangement can commence as soon as possible in the new municipal year;

(ii) in the meantime:

(a) an Economic Development Forum be established and officers are instructed to work with the Chamber of Commerce, the Future York group and other stakeholders to determine how this may operate and be supported;

(b) that the number of business representatives on the new Board be set at 4 and that the new Board consider whether permanently or from time to time, these numbers should be supplemented;

(c) that the Learning City York Partnership be invited to appoint a representative to the new Board to cover education, skills and training;

(d) that the Council be recommended to support 3 Councillor representatives on the new Board when it considers its future status under the constitutional review referred to at (1) above.

Reason: To help shape the effectiveness of the future role of the Board.

Contact Details

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Report Approved



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Specialist Implications Officers: None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: The Future York Group report – an independent strategic review of the York economy, June 2007

Annexes: None