

MEETING NOTES: Business Growth theme

Date: 16 March 2009

Venue: Burraton House, Poundbury

Attending:

(PS) Peter Scott (Chair) – Dorset Business	(DW) David Walsh (link officer) – DCC
(JW) John Wicks – BBC	(PW) Peter Wheelhouse – BoP
(MBn) Mary Boughton - FSB	(HR) Hilary Ritchie - NDDC
(GJ) Gareth Jones - WPBC	(TH) Trevor Hedger - WDDC
(RW) Richard Wilson - PDC	(HH) Helen Heanes- DCC
(KP) Kevin Poulton - EDDC	(SR) Steve Richards – SWRDA
(MBr) Matthew Butcher - Businesslink	(SW) Sarah Ward – WDDC (Housing theme Chair)
(MBt) Matthew Beaumont – Dorset Business	

Note: Discussion areas that the MAA Programme Manager recommends as needing urgent development by the theme group into specific action are **highlighted**

- Scoping and prioritisation - How do we progress?
 - (MBr) With impact of Recession there is a need to take a two stream approach – tactical (next 12->18 months) and strategic (longer term view)
 - (MBn) Rural areas suffer from inadequate logistic capacity/efficiency: Broadband coverage, mobile phone coverage, accessibility to services (time/location) still are problems for many
 - (MBr) priority in the Recession is the need now to **enhance business skills** (many are lacking) , within the sub-region and particularly within SME’s. This is key to any more strategic actions the Group might wish to address.
 - (SR) need a defined strategy for different areas. **Need a ‘unique selling proposition’** for the sub-region that answers the question , “ why would a business wish to locate to /remain in the sub-region?”
 - (JW) Need public sector authorities and agencies to lead by example (eg...**Procurement** teams working together)
 - (KP) Noted that the Dorset Pathfinder is likely to deliver a single procurement group for the county area.
 - (TH) suggested that the ‘compete for’ system needs to be adopted to a local/ Dorset-wide /sub regional model . This might be at the sub-contract level.
 - (MBr) Big issue is how to become a ‘preferred supplier’ The process needs to be simplified and once approved the status must apply across all government authorities/agencies for multiple dealings (scope and timeframe)

- (SW) noted that t £3B was paid to social landlords to provide housing in Dorset. It was important that as much of this spend went to local business as possible.
 - (PW) The Group can approach both the tactical and strategic – need to know where is greatest demand/need and what barriers are to be overcome.
 - (PS) Asked if establishing an 'export and trade office' was the business of the Group or for others?
 - (SR) Responded that this was the work of Businesslink (Business Support Simplification Process) and UKTI. The need is to be aware of their services but NOT to do their jobs/ duplicate their efforts when resources are limited.. (SR) suggested SWRDA would progress this work
 - (various) Need to **maximise the business growth legacy of the 2012 Olympics**
- What is 'Business Growth' ?Vision = 'place shaping' but with regard to significant current reality of an unprecedented downturn in the economy
 - (SR) Current political imperative is to keep unemployment numbers down
 - (HR) Making progress does not always need money
 - (JW) Supporting those involved with supporting 'Economic Development' is an investment in future prosperity
 - (GJ) Must do things differently to get different results
 - (PW) Must build on our strengths and take these forward to drive growth
 - Improve business/ worker productivity
 - Enhance levels of skill
 - Innovate
 - Increase average wage
 - **Align to Dorset demographic trends**
 - (KP) Observed that we lack action due to lack of a **clear focus on:**
 - **the 'conurbation' as a (the) driver of growth in the sub-region (750,000 people should be the engine for the rest of the 'supply chain' – there is a hierarchy for prioritising action**
 - **entrepreneurship to drive /draw inward investment**
 - **working together (as government) to increase business support up-take**
 - (SW) Described the sub-region and our desire to increase prosperity as being like a 1970's detached bungalow needing investment to maximise its current value for resale. First spending priority to maximise value enhancement is to update the kitchen (Bournemouth) , second is update the bathroom (Poole) , then decorate the bedrooms (market towns).
 - (MBr) All that is needed to drive to increase in **'business support' up-take, is for it to be talked** about – given media front page status. There is a need for a leader /'figure head' to associate themselves with the programme to get it the required publicity
 - (HH) raised concern as to how we get 'buy in' from above – the Leaders of the elected bodies.

- What are possible actions for the Group to develop? :
 - Ex Tony Bray (SWRDA) Delivery plan draft:
 - Improve delivery of business support
 - Encourage business innovation and incubators
 - Provision of ‘employment land’ and town centre regeneration/development
 - Ex Mark Hepworth (Geoeconomics):
 - Guarantee a high-performance business services network across the Sub-Region.
 - Set up export and trade office
 - Develop long-term growth programmes for the following clusters:
 - Marine – engineering, maritime logistics (port), business services and leisure
 - Creative & Digital – software, marketing and advertising, fashion and industrial design, media and entertainment
 - Environment goods and services (EGS) – includes engineering and construction, as well as R&D and conservation of the natural environment
 - maximise the business growth legacy of the 2012 Olympics
 - business engagement in the SE Dorset Transport Model
 - Establish a public sector procurement unit for the Sub-Region

Note: the above solution set is drawn only from the ‘business growth’ theme area. Other theme based solutions have significant cross-cutting interest for the Business Growth theme

- Housing stock impact on the wider economy:
 - (SW) Housing strategy context is set by National Indicators to achieve;
 - Building of more houses (Theme Group has no ability to influence)
 - Build/provide more affordable housing -> Can influence
 - Fuel poverty/energy efficiency -> Can influence
 - Provision for vulnerable people -> can influence but not ‘strategic’ ?
 - It is not a big step from housing to ‘economic development’
 - Improve affordability of housing(reduce capital cost, increase incomes, reduce cost of living
 - Shift from dedicated focus on lowest level (deprived) layer of population to intermediate housing for SME workforce (review allocations policy)
 - Tackle deprivation – improve health to reduce days absent from work, increase levels of ‘return s to work’.
 - Supporting regeneration of town centres- mix office/shopping/homes
 - Supply housing to draw particular skill sets to sub-region
 - Use housing spend to support local trades/suppliers
 - Responses:
 - (PS) Welcomed the interest shown by SW in cross theme working. Needs to be replicated by all theme groups.
 - (SR) Be alert to the changing policies of the Ministry of Defence on the garrison towns (Bovington/Blandford/Poole)

- (JW) 2nd home 'desolation' during week in villages/towns
 - (HH) Housing Association stock tends to be better in terms of energy efficiency than private builds
 - (RW) study of live/workplace options available
 - (KP) Improvements to increase energy efficiency on existing stock – needs to be a joined up co-ordination
 - (GJ) Space in 'empty nest' housing could be offered as business space to let (London scheme)
- Actions:
 - (GJ) to progress current work on 'marine cluster' for SE Dorset. **(GJ) to supply an update of current status and planned action for rest of 2009 to Chair /Link officer (Copy MBt) by end April 09**
 - (SR) SWRDA is waiting on a joint paper reviewing incubation space for Bournemouth University and Arts Institute at Bournemouth. To circulate to Group when available.
 - (MBn) Dorset Economic partnership work on 'procurement' – to circulate to Group
 - (DW) Draft letter for all partner Local Authority Chief Executives to forward to UKTI requesting details of how MAA partners could best support/ maximise benefit of the work of UKTI
 - (MBt) To make representation to the Transport Theme Group to:
 - Identify a Group member who would monitor /support the work of the Business Growth theme on behalf of Transport.
 - Ensure that business is engaged properly in the SE Dorset Multi-Modal Transport Study to ensure: *"...work with businesses in estimating the 'bottom line' impacts of transport improvement options on productivity and competitiveness"* (ex Hepworth report – March 09)
 - (HR) To progress and report to Group on 'master plan' for town centre regeneration and development
 - (PS) To identify and advise Group of 'Dorset business champions' that could be used to promote objectives of the Group such as 'Business Support' publicity.
 - (PS) To review the need to/interest in resurrection of a Dorset Enterprise Agency
 - (PS) To seek guest presenters from the business sector to occasionally address the Group
 - (HH) To scope a plan for inward investment by 2012 linked to the Olympic event (promotion image) not legacy
 - (RW) To present live/workplace report to Housing Theme Group at future date
 - (DW) To identify a Group member to provide cross membership role/liason with the Strategic Housing theme
 - (PW) To confirm meeting date/time with 'Shared Intelligence' to discuss sub-regional 'economic development ' capacity and to invite Theme Group Chairs to attend

Meeting Notes – Business Growth - 090316

- **(ALL above)** To provide brief update of progress against actions to DW by Tuesday 14 April

NEXT MEETING: 13th MAY 08:30 -> 10:00. (Venue to be advised)

PROPOSED AGENDA:

1. Report progress
2. Decide next steps
3. Prepare an activity report for the MAA Board meeting (21May)

END