

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum

10.00am on Thursday 22 May 2008

Trelawney Room, New County Hall, Truro

### Present:

Nigel Ashcroft	ICT Taskforce
John Berry	Cornwall Enterprise
Bert Biscoe	Rural Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Partnership
Stephen Bohane	SW Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)
Neil Burden	North Cornwall District Council
Nigel Carpenter	Cornwall Destination Management Organisation
Annette Egerton	Restormel Borough Council
Richard Fish	Connecting Cornwall
Lucy Harris	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum (Secretariat)
Nigel Hewitt	Combined Universities in Cornwall
Philip Hygate	Council of the Isles of Scilly (Vice Chairman)
Alan Jordan	Cornwall Marine Network
Carleen Kelemen	Partnership Office
Catherine Mead	Cornwall Agri Food Council
Jenny Milligan	GOSW
Andrew Mitchell	Cornwall County Council
Michelle O'Brien	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum (Secretariat)
David Pattison	Cornwall County Council
Chris Redding	Business Link
Hudson Smith	Penwith District Council
Thelma Sorensen	Cornwall Business Partnership (Chairman)
Blair Thomson	Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum
Carol Wells	Cornwall Business Partnership

### 1 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Sheila Johns – TUC; Carolyn Webster - Job Centre Plus; Sheila Healy – Cornwall County Council; Theo Leijser – South West RDA; Rose Barnecut - Creative Unit; Alan Shepherd - Cornwall Marine Network Carolyn Rule - Kerrier District Council; Polly Skinner - The Learning Partnership; Roger Jones - Caradon District Council; Bill George - Cornwall Association of Local Councils; Mark Williams - Learning and Skills Council; Phil McVey – South West Regional Development Agency; Les Donnithorne - Carrick District Council

### Non Attendees

David Brewer	Cornwall Business Partnership
Paul Brough	Heritage Task Force
Rick Hopkins	Cornwall Business Partnership
David Lobban	Cornwall Business Partnership
Ken Martin	Cornwall Manufacturers' Forum
Ian Smith	Environment Kernow

### In Attendance

Adam Chambers	Business Link
Geoff Hale	TUC Union Learn

## **2 Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2007**

The Minutes of the previous meeting on the 21 February 2008 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

## **3 Matters Arising**

### **Page 2 Newquay Airport**

Richard Fish confirmed that the Objective One offer letter had been received.

### **Page 2 LGR Update**

Hudson Smith pointed out that he had advised, at a previous meeting, that Penwith District Council were progressing with their Area Action Plan. He reported that 'One Cornwall' had now made the decision to proceed with the AAP for Truro and Falmouth to the apparent detriment of West Cornwall. He requested the support of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum to put the AAP for Penwith back on the agenda. Bert Biscoe sympathised with the request and added that it was not just the shift to a unitary authority which was affecting this, but also the shift to Area Action Plans and Local Development Framework Plans. He stated that the position on Planning currently was extraordinary as any appeal on a planning decision could encounter potential difficulties in the move to unitary authority status. He further suggested that a strategic dialogue with DCLG was required. All the Planning authorities need to move cohesively and a conversation needs to take place with DCLG to explore how the Planning System will ensure appropriate development. Thelma Sorensen added that the Private Sector had been concerned for some time about development under Convergence. Annette Egerton wished to support a proposal to write to DCLG. She advised that the Core Strategy for Restormel had been thrown out which, in turn, had quashed plans for the Newquay Growth Area which had been in the planning for over twenty years. The China Clay area Eco town is being supported, but this has not yet been incorporated into any plans. She stated her support of a single Core Strategy for Cornwall.

Richard Fish added that DCLG are pushing for a single Core Strategy, but the Planning Inspectorate is not making the process easy. The decision made by One Cornwall will be more about pooling resources to create the single Core Strategy. The process is now in place and the positions will be advertised shortly. Richard Fish will take up the issue of the Penwith AAP being shelved, as this is not sensible with the Strategic Infrastructure Framework (SIF) being developed for the area. He stressed that the two documents will need to be aligned.

Thelma Sorensen added that assurance had been previously received that all the AAPs are progressing as they will be required to feed into the Core Strategy. Bert Biscoe advised that, as some District Council Core Strategy's had been rejected, this left the county without the ability to adjudicate. The AAPs are not sufficiently regulatory in their own right.

### **Page 7 Convergence**

Thelma Sorensen reported that land assembly issues are being addressed for the Medi park. She advised that this is vital as the MediPark Innovation Centre is one of the first projects being put forward for the Convergence Programme and every effort should be made to ensure its delivery

Nigel Hewitt advised that the CUC Research Fund evaluation report has been completed.

**Action: Presentation on the CUC Research Fund to be arranged for a future meeting.**

## **4 Workforce Development Group**

Geoff Hale gave a background to his role within the TUC and the Workforce Development Group. The approach of the Workforce Development Group is to take Government policy and translate its delivery for the benefit of Cornwall. The Learning and Skills Council had recently given funding for an event to be held on Train to Gain and the Skills Pledge. The event was held at Eden and John Denham had been invited. However, he was unable to attend, but did film a DVD to be shown on the day. One of the messages was that, in this ever changing world, if you want to create prosperity it will depend entirely upon raising skills level in the work place.

The Workforce Development Project was established with the intention of raising skills. Those sitting around the table have the right knowledge to raise skills levels. There are four elements to the project; Sectors, Pathways, Level 3 development and Clusters. The group are pleased with the success of the project, although there are a few issues. One of the main issues is whether there is sufficient coverage across the county. A mapping exercise has taken place and the results showed that fairly good coverage has been achieved, although some small areas have been missed. A breakdown was available to show from where the sectors and clusters drew their people.

Thelma Sorensen enquired as to whether there had been an increase in salary for those engaged in the schemes. Geoff Hale reported that this information has not been gathered. The impact analysis did show that those involved were more likely to stay in the employment as they felt more valued.

Bert Biscoe asked to what extent the project was engaged in marrying up skills with the rural economy. He noted that the uptake on the map displayed showed fewer beneficiaries in rural areas, with the exception of the catchment area of the Lizard Pathways. Geoff Hale advised that there were limits to what could be done across the whole of Cornwall. The Group had adopted ways to deliver which would benefit the most people. The cluster idea was established to tackle harder to reach geographical areas, but there were no criteria on how they should be set up.

In response to a comment from Hudson Smith regarding successfully achieving the targets, Geoff Hale advised that it was hoped that more would be able to be achieved through the Convergence programme. Alan Jordan added that, as a sector, there is only so much which can be achieved. He further reported that there were plans to move the Cornwall Marine Network forward and to target new businesses who are not yet engaged.

Andrew Mitchell referred to sector led training development and asked for an opinion from the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum as to whether this was the right way forward. In his opinion, this was a good approach but he had concerns as to whether all partners were in agreement. He requested support from the Partnership for this approach.

Stephen Bohane reported that he had met with Theo Leijser. He confirmed that there will be SWRDA funds available to assist with the transfer to Business Link for IDB, but no funding available direct to sectors. The SWRDA want to help businesses to make the transition under the BSSP and were also keen to encourage Peer to Peer networking. The SWRDA are currently awaiting a response from Cornwall Enterprise on the sectors interim funding agreement.

Andrew Mitchell responded to state that what works for the rest of the country does not always work for Cornwall. If Cornwall wanted to support sector networks, then the SWRDA should assist in this support. He stated that the SWRDA were saying that the BSSP was not yet finalised and therefore they were not prepared to support sectors. Stephen Bohane responded on behalf of the SWRDA to confirm that all European Programme spend needed to sit within the BSSP.

Andrew Mitchell expressed his view that the programme was for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and therefore, if it wished to spend money in a certain way, it should be assisted in doing so. He further stated that Cornwall Enterprise had submitted four separate suggestions to the SWRDA, but each had been refused.

Nigel Carpenter noted that the targets for Tourism had not been achieved. Geoff Hale advised that the figures shown were not completely up to date. Nigel Carpenter further advised that, as an operator within the tourism industry, he was committed to workforce development, but that the training support available did not meet the needs of his company. He had received a large number of communications from organisations trying to deliver training but, this training had not met the needs of his business. Geoff Hale advised that the sector groups would need to better articulate the needs of their members in order to create more appropriate training.

Alan Jordan advised that the Cornwall Marine Network employ a training manager to deliver employer led training. The Marine Sector was in the position of the tourism sector five years ago. He felt strongly that sectors provide an avenue to engage. An evaluation report will be produced for the Marine Sector at the end of June. This will be circulated for information.

Carol Wells returned to the issue of Sectors and asked whether CCC would fund this approach if it was agreed that this was the way forward. She stated that SWRDA and Business Link had a remit to support high growth activity.

Catherine Mead stated that a leaner approach is not about cost cutting, but about achieving greater accountability in the workforce. Her greatest concern was the quality of the provision. Her company had self funded training as there had previously not been suitable courses available. She agreed that Cornwall did not have to settle with what was in the BSSP if it was not right for Cornwall and suggested that the Partnership fight harder against it. The Agri Food College is a project which was assisted under Objective One and part of its remit is to deliver to the Food Sector. Catherine Mead advised that it looks like it will not be possible to continue this remit under Convergence.

**Action: Comments to be fed into Geoff Hale who will feed into the Workforce Development Group to try to meet all Workforce Development needs.**

Thelma Sorensen summed up the discussion and added that the crux was to ensure that the training met the needs of business.

## **5 Business Link**

Adam Chambers updated the partnership on the Business Link service and how this will be changed. He wants the service to be business led and business focused and is passionate about listening to businesses, either individually or through networks. The Business Link service is purely Information Diagnostic and Brokerage (IDB) and they are not concerned with business support delivery. Businesses do not really understand what IDB means and therefore Business Link must ensure that the answers to the questions from businesses are available. IDB forms the Core service.

There is also an additional service which is funded by savings and SWRDA money. This service can focus on place based initiatives, areas of deprivation and the rural economy. The Convergence Programme will assist an intensification of the extended service.

SERCO have been running the Business Link service since December. The challenge was to ensure no deterioration in that service. He had been very impressed with the level of co-operation from all partners and the quality and professionalism of the staff in the transition period.

There are five elements to the transformation of the service.

1. Improve the gateway function
2. High value added projects – supply chain opportunities
3. Working with Young Enterprise to support entrepreneurial activity.
4. Developing Partnership activity – investing in more offices in Cornwall – co-locating
5. Business intelligence – how it can be used to improve customer service and market insight

One of the important things with the Business Support Simplification Programme is to avoid duplication. The restructure of Business Link, merging Somerset with Devon and Cornwall, gave the opportunity to rationalise back office functions and refocus front line services.

Adam Chambers further advised that Business Link was awaiting the green light from SWRDA on Convergence. He advised that the aim was to create a sustainable and lasting service which will leave a legacy for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. There is a need to fulfil government objectives and deliver value for money.

He is keen to work with CUC, Sector Networks, Cornwall Enterprise, CPR Regeneration, Job Centre Plus and the Councils and will talk to as many people as possible. There will be more partnership staff, particularly for Cornwall. There will also be investment in marketing, particularly to market to businesses what Convergence can do for them. The headcount of front line staff will increase by 20 for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Chris Redding, Head of Partnerships advised that a presentation will be produced for businesses on Convergence once the details have been finalised. She will work with partners to get the messages right and roll this out to businesses. Members were encouraged to contact Chris Redding for further information.

Adam Chambers stressed that Business Link was the delivery arm for SWRDA. Bert Biscoe and Andrew Mitchell advised that the Project Delivery Board will be making decisions and not the SWRDA.

Bert Biscoe reported that the Sub National Review is beginning to be understood as it is going to change the relationship between Cornwall and the SWRDA. He asked how flexibility had been built in to accommodate the changing environment. Adam Chambers responded by advising that Business Link has to create an organisation which reflects the needs of Cornwall now. As long as there is clarity around the political objectives, there are some aspects which are quite flexible e.g. more can be delivered on line or electronically. He felt personally that there should be a balanced approach depending on local need and believed that there would still be a need for Business Link post 2013, but the size and structure may be very different.

John Berry advised that the new team and approach was most welcome; as is the increased number of brokers for IDB. He had concerns that there was a danger of the business support framework happening in isolation. The Private Sector had met with the agencies to put forward a host of ideas, but there has not been real progress. He stressed the importance of engagement with the business community in Cornwall.

Carleen Kelemen asked how the three year contract with the SWRDA reflected on the ambitions of the service. Adam Chambers hoped that they will get another five year contract in order to keep consistency of service, but if they did not get the additional contract, there will be steps to ensure the service is in good order to hand over to a new contractor.

Catherine Mead agreed with John Berry that the holistic view of business support needed to be re-addressed, a simple gateway in the real world does not work. There also needs to be a scrutiny of the service to ensure that it is as good as it can be.

Adam Chambers was keen to hear from businesses which are not getting what they need from the service. The Customer Satisfaction element of the service is being improved by an independent organisation which is monitoring the service by contacting customers after they have received a service.

Peninsula Enterprise also is running Train to Gain and they are in discussions with the SWRDA on how they interlink the two services to make it more joined up.

Alan Jordan stated that industry specific advice has been taking place Peer to Peer, but this needs funds. There has been money available under Objective One, but not through the Convergence programme. He asked how this could be achieved. Adam Chambers responded that the service does not have specialist advisers and they would be looking to work with specialists.

Neil Burden asked who is supporting the innovation and inventors. Innovation has left the remit of GOSW and now sits with SWRDA.

## **6 Low Carbon Economy – Climate Change Action Plan**

Ian Smith was on leave and therefore did not attend the meeting.

Thelma Sorensen advised that there were concerns raised at the Executive Group meeting regarding the Wave Hub. She had relayed these concerns to Nick Harrington who will produce an explanatory paper for circulation.

**Action: Wave Hub paper to be circulated.**

## **7 Sustainable Community Strategy**

Lucy Harris delivered a presentation on the Sustainable Community Strategy giving a background to the methodology, the consultation itself and the vision.

Bert Biscoe advised that the Strategy will define the expenditure of £50m per year and felt that the Vision was neither auditable nor inspirational enough. Bert Biscoe was of the opinion that the vision for Cornwall County Council was a good clear statement and he thought that this would also be appropriate for the Strategy.

Thelma Sorensen suggested that the members highlighted the issue of the Vision with their respective organisations and fed comments into Lucy Harris by 30 May 2008.

In response to a query from Neil Burden, Lucy Harris advised that following the closing date of the consultation on 5 June, there will be amendments made and a redraft will go to the Cornwall Strategic Partnership.

Andrew Mitchell expressed concerns that there were large amounts of money to be spent which would be approved by the CSP. Bert Biscoe felt that it dealt with too many specific issues which only affected a smaller number of people, rather than high level strategic issues.

Catherine Mead referred to Maslow's hierarchy of need which had been used to direct parts of the Strategy. The lack of food is a huge issue; along with food security, water provision and dependency on fossil fuel. These issues offer huge opportunities for Cornwall.

Thelma Sorensen asked if it was possible to change the Sustainable Community Strategy to be more strategic at this late stage. Lucy Harris responded that, if that was the general

feeling, then this would have to be addressed. The original timescale for completion was driven by the LAA. As this is no longer an issue, it is more important that the strategy is right.

Jenny Milligan felt that many of the points being made were also made at the Stakeholder Event earlier in the year, but they had not been captured in any of the revisions.

Bert Biscoe reiterated that the process was not robust enough to support the expenditure of £50m per year. Andrew Mitchell added that some people will not be completely happy with the outcome if the document is to become sufficiently strategic. The consultation process has tried too hard to include too many people and therefore the final strategy is having to be all things to all people.

Neil Burden stated that the strategy will need to be adaptable to keep up with the pace of the times, things have already moved on.

Alan Jordan reported that Cornwall will need an understanding of how change can be managed and suggested engaging with CUC and Business Link to address how best to manage change to best serve the community of Cornwall. Adam Chambers suggested the main point of change management is to ensure that there is sufficient buy in from stakeholders in order to move forward.

**Action: Adam Chambers to address the change management issues and respond to Lucy Harris.**

**Action: Members to take the document back to their organisations and respond to Lucy Harris.**

## **8 Questions on EU Programmes Update**

No questions had been forwarded to the Secretariat prior to the meeting.

Neil Burden asked if Cornwall was in a position to spend the additional money, which will result from the changes in the value of the Euro, through the Convergence Programme. Carleen Kelemen advised that, under Objective One, there had been an over allocation which used such additional money. She advised that GOSW are trying to get a Phase 2 and a half. Any over commitment will be underwritten by the Treasury and this funding is being assessed on a weekly basis. This does still need to be spent by September/October. Stephen Bohane was unsure as to the procedure which will be followed in Convergence.

**Action: Stephen Bohane to report back on the procedure for spend of additional funds extending from changes in the Euro.**

Andrew Mitchell stated that the N+2 situation is very serious, there is an urgent need to concentrate on spend. Jenny Milligan advised that the first N+2 target will come in at the end of 2009. Thelma Sorensen reiterated the urgency to proceed with major projects as there is a need to proceed through the planning process and achieve spend. Andrew Mitchell stressed that the money had to actually be spent and not committed. He added that all partners have some responsibility and he is ensuring that CCC is playing its role. He further reported that there should have been more progress as the Commissioning Teams have been working to move the programme forward. The Business Support Simplification Programme is not allowing money to be spent in some areas. There had been talk at the Executive Group meeting of a Recovery Plan; this should be progressed as a precaution.

Richard Fish advised that the Offer Letter template had needed to be approved by DCLG. Thelma Sorensen stressed that the Executive Group had been told by Theo Leijser that the

Offer Letter would be received within the few days following the meeting. Richard Fish further advised that this message had been received a number of times. Andrew Mitchell stressed that a meeting would take place with Regional Partners to find a way through the issue of spend.

Bert Biscoe stated that Cornwall needs to focus on 2013. If Cornwall fails, it will not fall to the SWRDA, but to Cornwall itself. Following the success of Objective One, the ability to be able to compete in the European competitive market beyond 2013 is acute.

**Action: A letter to be sent to Jane Henderson from the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum expressing the concerns most strongly.**

**Action: Jane Henderson to be invited to a special meeting of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum if issues cannot be resolved.**

In response to a query from Alan Jordan, Carleen Kelemen advised that Jane Henderson was the Returning Officer for the Convergence Programme and should be able to give the answers Cornwall needs at this time.

Blair Thomson stressed that this issue should be raised at the Programme Monitoring Committee.

Thelma Sorensen asked for an update on ICT from Nigel Ashcroft. He advised that the project went through the pre-commissioning stage and has gone to the Project Development Board. At this stage it went to Peer Review and the option was split apart at the last minute (Digital Infrastructure and demand stimulation). It has gone from a holistic project which was ready to go, to a position where the Private Sector now needed to be approached to spend £70m but with the other element not yet confirmed. He had hoped that Theo Leijser would be at the meeting.

**Action: Members to send a paragraph in writing to Andrew Mitchell on any issues with projects for Convergence.**

Thelma Sorensen stressed the major success of Actnow was the business demand stimulation.

**Action: Stephen Bohane to take the views of the meeting back to the SWRDA.**

## **9 Strategy and Action Evidence Base**

A detailed briefing paper had been circulated. Recommendations had been presented to and agreed by the Executive Group. Lucy Harris reported that the next review of the Evidence Base will drill down further into the data. Thelma Sorensen thanked Lucy Harris for all her hard work. Lucy Harris further advised that the Sector Profiles are now being refreshed and the work on the Voluntary Sector Research which had been carried out by Perfect Moment was now being taken on by the Research Team.

Carleen Kelemen stated that all the changes and reduction in research personnel had resulted in the County Council no longer having up to date economic analysis for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. For example, how many jobs have been created by businesses broken down by SIC code and value? She hoped that this sort of data would be available following the transition into OneCornwall.

Lucy Harris advised that a letter had been sent to the SWRDA to seek interim support for research. Phil McVey has commented that a letter will be sent to all partnerships advising of interim support for this activity; this has not yet been received.

## **10 Any Other Business**

Bert Biscoe tabled a letter reporting on the progress of the Cornish Language Partnership. The focal projects for the Partnership have been to evolve a standard written form to be used in education and public life; introduce Kernewek in the curriculum of Cornish Schools and initiate and commission research into various aspects of usage and quality.

The Cornish Language will be available in schools in September. This will mean that there will be a substantial growth in the use of the language over the next decade or so. There is also informal evidence that, in schools where Cornish is available, there has also been an increased interest in other languages.

Lucy Harris referred to the draft response to the Sub National Review of Economic Development. The deadline for responses is 20 June and all members were requested to send in their comments.

**Action: Comments on the Sub National Review to be forward to Lucy Harris by 13 June.**

## **11 Date of Next Meetings**

4 September 2008 10.30 am, Alverton Manor, Truro

27 November 2008 10.30 am, Tbc

24 February 2009 10.00am Trelawney Room, New County Hall

26 May 2009, 10.00am Trelawney Room, New County Hall

3 September 2009, 10.00am Trelawney Room, New County Hall

26 November 2009, 10.30am Trelawney Room, New County Hall

The meeting closed at 12.50pm.