

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

**10.30am on Wednesday 28 November 2007**

**Rosewarne, Duchy College, Camborne**

**Present:**

Nigel Ashcroft	ICT Taskforce
Rose Barnecut	Creative Unit
John Berry	Cornwall Enterprise
Bert Biscoe	Rural Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Partnership
Stephen Bohane	SW Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)
David Brewer	Cornwall Business Partnership
Paul Brough	Heritage Task Force
Neil Burden	North Cornwall District Council
Philippa Collett	Learning and Skills Council
Les Donnithorne	Carrick District Council
Annette Egerton	Restormel Borough Council
Richard Fish	Connecting Cornwall
Lucy Harris	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum (Secretariat)
Peter Hardaker	Cornwall Agricultural Council
Rick Hopkins	Cornwall Business Partnership;
Philip Hygate	Council of the Isles of Scilly (Vice Chairman)
David Lobban	Cornwall Business Partnership
Ken Martin	Cornwall Manufacturers' Forum
Jenny Milligan	Government Office for the South West (GOSW)
Andrew Mitchell	Cornwall County Council
Michelle O'Brien	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum (Secretariat)
David Pattison	Cornwall County Council
Alan Pearce	Job Centre Plus for Karen Chapman
Neil Robertson	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum (Secretariat)
Carolyn Rule	Kerrier District Council
Alan Shepherd	Cornwall Marine Network
Ian Smith	Environment Kernow
Thelma Sorensen	Cornwall Business Partnership (Chairman)
Blair Thomson	Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum
Ian Tunbridge	Combined Universities in Cornwall
Carol Wells	Cornwall Business Partnership

**1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Sheila Johns – TUC; Karen Chapman - Job Centre Plus; Nigel Carpenter - Cornwall Destination Management Organisation; Bob Dow - Business Link; Mark Williams - Learning and Skills Council; Barbara Ellenbroek- Cornwall Business Partnership; Hudson Smith - Penwith District Council; Bill George - Cornwall Association of Local Councils; Sheila Healy – Cornwall County Council; Hugh Francis -Caradon District Council; Carleen Kelemen – Objective One Partnership Office; Bob Dow – Business Link.

## **Non-Attendees**

Polly Skinner  
Andrew Mitchell

## **In Attendance**

David Rodda	Cornwall Agricultural Council (for item 5)
Bill Holliday	Rural Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Partnership (for item 5)
Rob Grose	Kerrier District Council
Rob Hatt	South West RDA
Colin Molton	South West RDA (for item 6)
Theo Leijser	South West RDA

The members wished to pass on their best wishes to Sheila Johns who has been unwell for some time.

## **2 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2007**

The Minutes of the previous meeting on the 5 September 2007, were agreed as a true and accurate record.

## **3 Matters Arising**

Bert Biscoe requested that names be included in full within future minutes, as it is difficult to quickly identify the individuals that are being referred to by initials.

### **Page 3 Isles of Scilly Route Partnership Project**

Philip Hygate advised this project was progressing well.

### **Page 2 LGR update**

Carol Wells queried whether it had been decided whether the elections for the new Council would take place in 2008 or 2009. Richard Fish advised that CCC was working towards 2009, subject to the Boundary review. Annette Egerton added that it is essential to get the number of Councillors right and advised that she and Neil Burden were on the Joint Interim Committee. Neil Burden reported that an announcement had been made that very morning to advise that elections will be in 2009 and Parish and Town Council elections will take place in 2013.

Bert Biscoe reported that the principal of a Unitary Authority was well established and raised issues he considered critical including area networks, the relationship between stakeholders and the authority and what happens to the property assets. The challenge is to produce the best Unitary Authority in the Country to manage public services. Blair Thomson stressed the importance that all members around the table should be involved and to make every effort to engage, even if not approached directly by the team responsible,. Ian Tunbridge added that this was an opportunity to really engage with communities and encourage them to make the most of the opportunities it presented in Cornwall.

Kerrier District Council had decided at full Council to withdraw their Area Action Plan as it needs to be revisited and reworked. The evidence in existence will be used to take forward projects until the first quarter of 2009. The Chairman expressed concerns at this news, as Convergence has deadlines on spend within the programme and she considered that this delay would have serious implications, particularly in the Kerrier District which has been recognised as a regeneration area. Annette Egerton added that all the Districts were having problems with the LDF system. Thelma Sorensen advised that this is being addressed as a top priority.

Colin Molton stated that the SWRDA were taking Counsel's advice on the CPO and that the

view was to proceed. In response to a query regarding the possible effects on the Heartlands Project, Carolyn Rule advised that this would not be affected as the land and funds for this were already in place. Thelma Sorensen stressed that there was a wider area of deprivation in CPR which needed to be addressed. Carolyn Rule responded that there was urgent dialogue taking place on this issue

### **Page 3 EU Programmes Update**

Phil McVey advised that the final version of the Operational Programme Document for ERDF was now with the Commission. This is due to be approved in December and will commence in January 2008.

Alan Shepherd reported that Cornwall Enterprise were engaged with Nick Turner on pre-commissioning and asked as to whether this could be progressed. Phil McVey advised that progress could be made following approval and sign off by the Programme Monitoring Committee. Thelma Sorensen wished to make a plea for the Private Sector to be involved as much as possible in the process

Alan Pearce advised that the Department of Work and Pensions had replaced Job Centre Plus relating to ESF. However, Carolyn Webster from Job Centre Plus has been involved in writing the programme with a very informed Cornwall focus.

Alan Shepherd wished to congratulate the Learning and Skills Council on sending out the tenders and getting the process underway.

### **Page 7 Strategic Economic Partnership Chairs Update**

The Chairman reported that the last meeting of this group had taken the decision to make its minutes generally available.

Neil Burden reassured the Partnership regarding the commissioning and disposal limit of assets of £100,000 and over. Such cases will only need to be referred to the Secretary of State if a resolution cannot be found at a local level.

### **Page 10 Peninsula Enterprise**

The new Business Link contract commences on 1 December, but the new services will not be fully operational before April 2008.

## **4 Newquay Airport**

Richard Fish reported that RAF St Mawgan will lose its full operating potential as an RAF base in August 2008. The team are addressing the requirements for taking over the site as a civil airport within a very tight timescale. Discussions are underway with Ministers to extend the MOD deadline to the end of October. The runway surface does not currently comply with Civil Aviation regulations and this needs to be addressed and will incur an additional expense. Discussions regarding land acquisition are underway with Defence Estates with ongoing issues over land values. New fire engines have been purchased and a new fire station built. A funding package is in place made up of monies from SWRDA, Objective One and borrowed funds from Cornwall County Council. The Airport Development Fee is being used to assist the funding of capital build.

Nationally, there has been a downturn in air travel numbers, but numbers are increasing in Cornwall. There has been a great deal of interest from airlines which is helping to attract inward investment from business and also to further promote Cornwall as a destination. Flybe have just announced new routes from Newquay. Growth in passenger numbers needs to coincide with infrastructure improvements.

Aviation related business opportunities are being pursued. It is hoped that the MOD will soon start to release some of the buildings on the facility to enable business growth.

Capital and revenue costs are being re-addressed and an exit strategy is being worked up to take the airport forward with the ultimate aim of becoming Private Sector led. Convergence expenditure will be focused on the long term goals.

There is a strong focus on the important issues of climate change and the team is addressing mitigation throughout the entire master planning process.

Thelma Sorensen congratulated Richard Fish on the progress achieved so far with what was recognised as difficult and complicated negotiations with the different organisations and bodies involved in securing the civilian airport in such a tight timescale.

Richard Fish advised that there will be no future military presence at the airport, unless the Country is in a state of national emergency. Bert Biscoe asked how the threat of the military taking over the airport, in the event of national emergency, would fair for Private Sector investment. Richard Fish advised that this is something which cannot be accounted for; the QE2 was privately owned at the time of the Falklands War. It was also pointed out that there are a significant number of airports in the Country which were previously MOD establishments and this had not affected their Private Sector development.

Ian Smith was pleased that climate change was being considered and addressed, but was concerned that there had not been mention of rising fuel prices. In response to this, Richard Fish advised that the whole project was driven by risk management and this was included in the longer term planning.

Although the State Aid issues have been resolved a confirmation letter, it is yet to be received from GOSW.

**Action: Jenny Milligan to address absence of offer letter with GOSW.**

## **5 Update on RDPE and proposal for Structures**

David Rodda gave a background to the RDPE identifying the axis as follows:-

- **Axis 1** - Improving the competitiveness of the farming and forestry sectors; (10%)
- **Axis 2** - Improving the environment and the countryside; (80%)
- **Axis 3** - Quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy; (10%)
- **Axis 4** – Implementation of the 'Leader Approach'; (minimum of 5% of overall programme budget)

The priorities for the South West are:-

- Improving business efficiency and enabling business transformation
- Developing the supply chain and adding value
- Managing resources efficiently
- Making the most of our rural environment
- Enhancing landscapes and biodiversity
- Maintaining strong and inclusive rural communities

The amount of money available under the new arrangements is half of what was available under Objective One. Work is underway with partners on the Regional Implementation Plan. Partners include Natural England, Forestry Commission, SWRDA, DEFRA, GOSW and the Environment Agency. The South West Regional Implementation Group is chaired by GOSW and its remit includes responsibility for overseeing delivery across the South West (including Cornwall), ensuring effective external scrutiny and communication. The regional implementation plan identifies the regional priorities and investment themes. The SWRDA is working well with partners and listening to what is needed.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly RDPE Implementation Group brings together local partners to address the SW RIP priorities and supports co-ordination between the delivery of axis 1, 2, 3 and 4. It also facilitates links between EU and other programmes, champions the needs and aspirations of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and facilitates engagement of the private, community and voluntary sectors in RDPE delivery. The Plan has been agreed in principle by SW RIG and local partners, the finer details are still under development.

Bill Holliday presented the aims and objectives of Local Action for Rural Communities. The principles of LEADER are that it is area based (5000-150000 pop) with a bottom up, partnership approach. It is to be used for innovation and experimentation, by an integrated approach and will encourage networking between areas. The financing and management will be undertaken locally and the budget is £28.09m EU/Defra for the South West over 7 years. Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has £2.75m guaranteed (5%), but is able to bid into the rest. Competitive bidding 'expressions of interest' need to be submitted by 31 December with full bids by 23 May. Final decisions will be made in July 2008. David Rodda reminded those present that the Rosewarne site was created by LEADER. LEADER 1 bought the land and LEADER 2 developed it. A meeting was held at Lanhydrock where all the partners concerned had agreed to work together to give a stronger approach for Cornwall.

The overall budget is less, so it is important how it is applied. Rob Hatt added that the £2.75m contribution is ring fenced, but there is no limit on how much money can come into Cornwall. Bert Biscoe reported that the money is spread over six years. As local authority groups will need to be facilitated and operational capacity will be required, he suggested a single administrative support to save funds and share expertise.

John Berry advised that the national programmes offer an opportunity of spend of approximately £250m in Cornwall.

## **6 Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP)**

Colin Molton reported that the BSSP has implications for everyone. In March 2006, the Chancellor announced the proposal to reduce business support schemes from 3000 to 300. The aim of the programme is to increase the ease of use, effectiveness and efficiency of government support to business; it is not about cutting the amount of money going to businesses. Consultation took place between June and September and the responses will be produced in December. There had been strong, but not universal support, for Business Link. The initial response and seventeen proposed products are published on the BERR website. However, it is likely that there will eventually be twenty products. Business Link will provide the Information Diagnostic and Brokerage service and be the primary access channel. The challenge for SWRDA is to ensure that spend from the single pot is aligned with the product. The BSSP works in context of the new Corporate Plan. There is currently mapping work being undertaken looking at the range of products and related activity. The work currently underway should be completed by Christmas. The Regional Transition Management Plan will look at amalgamating or closing down products. Branding and delivery will conform to frameworks and it is critical that work is undertaken with those around the table.

Phil McVey added that there may be elements through Convergence which are outside of the remaining products, therefore advice is being sought. Rob Hatt advised that this also applies to the Rural Programme and potential inconsistencies are being highlighted. Colin Molton reported that Local Authorities do not have to comply with the programme.

John Berry advised that, on the service agreement, the products look acceptable but, on further investigation, it is apparent that they are not completely appropriate for Cornwall. He stressed the importance that all parties respond to BERR. Phil McVey reiterated the importance that the messages get through to the right people at BERR.

Colin Molton reported that RDAs are being asked to co-ordinate business support via the Regional Economic Strategy, advising that even areas delegated to a local level need to be compliant. Intervention is being addressed at a regional and local level. Bert Biscoe stressed the importance of dialogue between the sub region and the SWRDA.

Ian Smith advised that the Sector Support Organisations were also plentiful as there were at least thirteen Sector Support organisations trying to deliver skills. There is a need for direction for people trying to find their way through the process.

Philippa Collett advised that the demand for sector support needed to come from the businesses. Alan Shepherd stated that the Cornwall Marine Network engages with businesses to ensure their needs are met and they are sharing this practice across other sectors. ESF is helping sectors to build their capacity. Jenny Milligan advised that tenders for ESF do state that that they need to be BSSP compliant.

John Berry stated that businesses do not want a large number of people from the public sector contacting them. It is important to have a co-ordinated approach. Philippa Collett reported that there is money for cross-sector collaboration. David Pattison raised a concern that there is a danger of reducing Cornwall's capacity as there is pressure for a nationalised approach. Cornwall is trying to strengthen itself to develop but, there is a possibility that big players from outside the County will be deliverers which may reduce local capacity. Blair Thomson advised that, as this is the last time Cornwall will receive this kind of money, it is important to build a long term sustainable structure for delivery.

## **7 Strategy and Action – Delivery and Monitoring Plan**

LH presented the first report on the delivery and monitoring plan to the members. The supporting paper had been circulated prior to the meeting.

She advised that the report identified only a number of key extracts from the full delivery and monitoring reports which had been provided by partners during this reporting period.

It is intended that this report should demonstrate a) significant progress to highlight good news; and b) issues for the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum to consider and discuss in order to assist in devising resolutions to overcome barriers to delivery.

The Delivery and Monitoring Plan has been designed to hold a variety of detail relating to the delivery of Strategy and Action in order to allow the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum to monitor and challenge progress. It is intended to be easy for partners to complete and be flexible enough to allow changes to be made to ensure that the report is fit for purpose.

The development of the plan has been undertaken over the last few months in consultation with the Economic Forum Executive Group (during general meeting plus a single issue meeting), the Economic Development Officers across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, and each of the partners identified as "lead".

Due to a number of reasons (including the lateness of a number of the reports being received and the stage in strategy delivery), it has not been possible to prepare a monitoring report relating to the Top 10 priorities this quarter. However, work will be done in this area to allocate a "Top 10 champion" who will be responsible for reporting back on these priorities. It is planned that this will be prepared for the next meeting.

There are a number of improvements planned for the next quarter. Lucy Harris requested the support of the members in ensuring reports were returned in future quarters. She

requested that the members feedback comments on the report content. It was agreed that the shading for priority did not really work when the papers are in black and white but assured members that such initial issues will be resolved over time.

### **The members agreed with the four recommendations made:**

1. That for this, and each quarter, members review the progress made and discuss potential resolutions to the issues/blockages raised by partners (primarily those areas which are highlighted as requiring discussion)
2. The members consider whether the report is useful and that the appropriate distilled information is contained within it.
3. That members consider and agree the information contained within the overall Delivery and Monitoring plan and advise if there is surplus information and/or anything missing
4. That partners ensure that future timely reports are provided to the Secretariat

The most important area of the report is the issues and blockages section. This highlights any areas that need to be considered and discussed. There was only one main area of concern, which was the spatial investments priority. Annette Egerton advised that Restormel Borough Council were very disappointed that this scheme had been postponed. The Eddington review has implications for St Austell. There are currently no solutions to relieve the traffic congestion. Richard Fish advised that government was reallocating funds which reduced the pot of money for infrastructure. Cornwall both gained and lost in the first round of the Regional Funding Allocation. Although the A391 is a protected route, it may need to be endorsed to drive it further up the regional agenda. Thelma Sorensen stressed the importance of this issue being kept on the regional agenda.

It was agreed that the Temple to Higher-Carblake and the Chiverton Cross Schemes should be separated out in the report and that the former scheme should be highlighted as urgent because it is a crucial, yet relatively cheap and easy scheme, which should definitely be moved up the priority list.

In terms of encouraging investment in cultural and creative assets, Bert Biscoe commented that the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum should use its position as the Region of Culture proposal would benefit from some increased bid writing skills. There should be a priority passport to all other European Funding programmes which Cornwall should take advantage of, Post-Convergence. Cornwall needs to capacity to write bids. It was agreed that CCC and Cornwall Enterprise should take this forward and develop capacity.

Ian Tunbridge commented that the SW UK Brussels Office and Cornwall Enterprise are first rate in informing and involving partners with other EU opportunities.

### **Action: CCC and Cornwall Enterprise to discuss future capacity for bid-writing setting up a small group to discuss this which should include Phil McVey.**

It was agreed that the report is extremely useful. Rose Barnecut stated that it was particularly useful in being able to raise issues and blockages. Ian Tunbridge requested that future reports should indicated why there are no response or reports from partners. John Berry thanked Lucy Harris for the hard work undertaken in producing the plan and providing the members with this detailed report.

## **8 Local Area Agreement Update**

The Chairman introduced this agenda item and stated that there is still considerable confusion with this subject. There is a need for significant Private Sector input and Cornwall already has good experience of working in Partnership – it is well-developed compared to other areas.

The Chairman then left the meeting handing over the chair to the Vice Chairman. Alan Shepherd recommended that the Chairman congratulate Jonathan Ball on behalf of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum for securing the Rescue 2010 surf lifesaving championships for Newquay.

The Vice Chairman handed this agenda item over to Lucy Harris.

During the last meeting of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum, it had been agreed that a sub-group would be set up to deliver the objectives of a Thematic Monitoring Partnership for the Enterprise and Economy strand of the Local Area Agreement. The first meeting had taken place in early November 2007.

The inaugural meeting was set up to consider three main items:

- a) Consider and agree a draft "Terms of Reference". This was agreed subject to some amendments and additional representation from the Private Sector.
- b) To discuss the refresh of existing outcome documents (Project Initiation Documents – PIDs). The existing outcomes relate to:
  - i. Worklessness
  - ii. Sustainable Energy
  - iii. Employment Space
  - iv. Town Regeneration
  - v. Workforce Development
  - vi. (The Best start for Young People – this is covered under the Children and Young People Theme, but is an important element of Strategy and Action and therefore the Economic Forum undertakes some monitoring of this outcome)

The existing outcomes were not discussed in great detail at this stage, as the refresh process has been delayed slightly to accommodate the development time for the new Sustainable Community Strategy.

The new LAA, which is to commence in June 2008, is the driving force behind the timescale for the Sustainable Community Strategy, the refresh process and the development of the new LAA outcomes.

- c) The sub-group was also asked to discuss and agree ***the principles*** contained within a series of proposed new LAA outcomes, which will be required to be submitted to GOSW shortly.

These new outcomes have been developed following a mapping exercise undertaken to identify gaps in the delivery of Strategy and Action.

It is recognised that these will need much further development, alignment with the new Sustainable Community Strategy and negotiation with GOSW before approval in time for the June 2008 launch.

The ***principles*** behind the following new outcomes were agreed:

- i. Innovation and R&D
- ii. Business Development
- iii. Information Society
- iv. Culture - This fourth new outcome was briefly discussed. It was agreed that this should be developed further, but broadened out from its existing status to cover other relevant

elements of the "**Distinctiveness**" Objective contained within Strategy and Action.

- v. Economic Governance Structure – It was also agreed that David Pattison, CCC should consider the development of an additional outcome to look at this issue.

Concerns were raised regarding the tight timescale of the review of the Sustainable Community Strategy stressing that there may not be enough depth in the content to carry it across the next twenty years. Blair Thomson advised that the current document is not fit for purpose which is the reason the review is being pushed ahead. The review team have tried to engage as many people as possible at all levels. Jenny Milligan questioned whether the timescale could be re-considered to ensure that the new document is of the right quality, recognising that the LAA timetable is the driving force behind the process. Blair Thomson agreed to discuss the subject further with Richard Bayly.

**Action: Blair Thomson to contact Richard Bayly regarding the timescale and suitability of the Sustainable Community Strategy.**

Neil Burden expressed a view that there was still a lack of understanding relating to the LAA and there is no simple guidance available.

**Action: Jenny Milligan to circulate simple guidance via the Secretariat when available.**

Jenny Milligan advised that the objective of the LAA is to identify priorities and ensure they are delivered. The principle is to get more delivered in a more efficient way, making better use of the skills capacity within the people and have less process. Cornwall already does this very effectively which is the reason that those working around it cannot see as much of an impact as those elsewhere in the country.

Blair Thomson advised that Cornwall is being held up as a model of best practice for partnership working.

Philip Hygate highlighted the area of freedoms and flexibilities which was the real advantage to the agreements.

Bert Biscoe queried whether there was a report available to outline the impact of the Sustainable Communities Act.

## **9 Questions on EU Programme Update**

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

## **10 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **11 Date of Next Meetings**

21 February 2008 10.30 am, Trelawney Room, NCH  
22 May 2008 10.30 am, Trelawney Room, NCH  
4 September 2008 10.30 am, Trelawney Room, NCH  
27 November 2008 10.30 am, Tbc

The meeting closed at 1.20pm.