

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

**10.00am on Wednesday 20 December 2006**

**Trelawney Room, New County Hall, Truro**

**Present:**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Richard Adams      | Business Link Devon and Cornwall                          |
| 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                             |
| Neil Burden        | North Cornwall District Council                           |
| Nigel Carpenter    | Cornwall Destination Management Organisation              |
| Annette Egerton    | Restormel Borough Council                                 |
| Barbara Ellenbroek | Cornwall Business Partnership                             |
| Malcolm Garrington | Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Economic Forum (Secretariat)   |
| Peter Hardaker     | Cornwall Agricultural Council                             |
| 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)            |
| Philip Johnson     | Government Office for the South West                      |
| Carleen Kelemen    | Objective One Partnership Office                          |
| Nick Mallard       | Caradon District Council                                  |
| Phil McVey         | South West Regional Development Agency                    |
| Andrew Mitchell    | Cornwall County Council                                   |
| Michelle O'Brien   | Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum (Secretariat) |
| Mark Richardson    | Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum                           |
| Neil Robertson     | Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Economic Forum (Secretariat) |
| Alan Shepherd      | Cornwall Marine Network                                   |
| Polly Skinner      | Lifelong Learning Partnership                             |
| Ian Smith          | Environment Kernow  |
| Thelma Sorensen    | Cornwall Business Partnership (Chairman)                  |
| Carol Wells        | Cornwall Business Partnership                             |
| Gill Wilson        | Carrick District Council                                  |
| Mark Williams      | Learning and Skills Council                               |

**In Attendance**

Phil Mason  
David Rodda  
Ross Williams

**1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from: Gareth Grimshaw (Government Office for the South West); Bill George (Cornwall Association of Local Councils); Sheila Healy (Cornwall County Council); Sheila Johns (TUC); David Lobban (Cornwall Business Partnership); Paul Brough (Heritage Task Force); Jill Harvey (Job Centre Plus); Hudson Smith (Penwith District Council); Bob Dow (Business Link); Blair Thomson (Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum); Sheila Healy (Cornwall County Council); David Pattison (Cornwall County Council)

## **2 Minutes of the meeting held 22 November 2006**

NB was in attendance at the last meeting, the minutes would be amended to reflect this. Subject to this amendment the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

## **3 Matters Arising**

### **Page 6 Head of Operations Report**

SB advised that it is South Crofty and not South Wheal Crofty.

### **Page 2 Heartlands**

TS advised that a letter of support has been sent to both the Heartlands and the Edge projects.

### **Page 4 Spyrys**

Gordon Kelly is reviewing the project and will make recommendations in January.

### **Page 4 Newquay Airport**

SWRDA has announced £8million support which will contribute to the CAA requirements and the expansion of the existing terminal. AM is talking to the Department for Transport to encourage financial support.

### **Page 4 Local Government Review**

There is a very tight timescale to submit the proposals. Both the District and County Councils are drawing up plans, but only one bid will be accepted by central government. AM was hopeful that relationships between the councils would not deteriorate.

NB added that the rules are changing everyday and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is appalled at the way that County Councils are treating District Councils across the Country. The Lyons report gives an alternative view on the proposals.

### **Page 9 Employment Space Strategy**

Work on this is ongoing.

## **4 Strategy and Action - Update on recent amendments**

LH advised that there have been minor changes to the document since it was circulated to members. Hard copies of the final document had been circulated. The changes made were in the following areas:-

- CCC Statement
- Rural Proofing
- Executive Summary – wording around distinctiveness
- Vision (minor wording amendments to the delivery element)
- SWOC (SWOT Analysis)
- Additional partners have been added to the Learning and Skills sections

CW was keen for the wording to be amended within the SWOT analysis relating to the focus on female entrepreneurs. Also amendments to be made to wording of Much Improved Transport Links to 'Improving'.

DB commented that he thought that the vision was a self fulfilling statement and not aspirational. He proposed a new vision. The group were reminded that the vision had previously been discussed and agreed at a strategic level and it was too important to change at this late stage. AE pointed out that the original vision statement is much more straightforward and that this should be retained.

There was discussion around the figure for reduction of carbon emissions as there was a view that this was not aspirational enough. LH advised that the figure had come from work carried out by the CSEP. After discussion, it was agreed that the figure would remain, but that some additional wording would be included to reflect that this figure would be reviewed and increased in the future. It was also agreed that the energy section would be moved to a later part of the "place" chapter, following transport and sustainable communities.

SB raised a query as to why the date of the Strategy is set to 2021. The partnership was reminded that this was considered to be sufficient time after the period of Convergence to allow for measurement of impact of the European Funds and enable future planning for economic development. The view of the group was that the date should remain as 2021, however the justification for this should be explicit within the text.

CW wished the placement of the Climate change aspect to be reconsidered as she felt it was an holistic subject which was boxed into an inappropriate space. JB added that the Environmental Assessment had addressed this issue and independently thought that Energy was cross cutting throughout the document.

Concerns were raised at this point from some members who felt strongly that many of the issues being raised had been discussed previously and that this meeting was not to discuss the finer points which had already been agreed. A view was presented that the timing of the sign off of the Strategy was imperative if it was to effectively influence the Convergence Programme. PJ reassured the Partnership, that Strategy and Action was already influencing the Convergence programme. He wished to note credit to LH for all her hard work.

NC felt that the document did not sufficiently reflect the uniqueness of Cornwall compared to the rest of the EU. He was keen to express a view that the final Strategy should not be a bland interpretation of the Lisbon Agenda. AS stressed that the important element was that the contents of the Strategy were realistic and achievable, that it should be signed off and agreed and made to work.

AM added that Strategy and Action was already influencing thinking and working well with regional partners. This document is more than just a lever for Convergence and it was important that the discussions moved forward and did not duplicate issues already discussed and agreed.

The external evaluation report requested by the Chairman and submitted by Vassilis Monastiriotis from the London School of Economics (LSE) raised several significant issues which, after due consideration and discussion, it was agreed should be part of a reconciliation exercise. It was felt that the strategy document provides the correct framework, but the evaluation makes important points relating to the delivery which requires further work to address.

Following a proposal by BB there was a vote to which the majority agreed that Strategy and Action would be approved, subject to a reconciliation exercise taking place in the New Year to take account of the external evaluation. This would mean that the Strategy will not be published until this piece of work has been completed. The SWRDA agreed to fund this additional work and a special meeting is to be arranged for February to review and agree.

This work should consider further the links between the sections, additional detail on delivery (likely to be covered within an accompanying action plan), further work relating to monitoring (which could be a part of the performance management system proposed to be developed in the future) along with how external events effect the proposed strategy. In addition, the evaluation recommended that prioritisation takes place. This was already proposed to follow the agreement of the Strategy document itself.

## 6 Prioritisation Exercise

Discussion took place on the relevance of this item in view of the decision taken to undertake further work relating to the document. A suggestion to circulate a comprehensive matrix which is easy to complete and return was agreed.

**Action: LH and CW to work on a matrix to be circulated in January for completion and return by all members.**

## 7 Convergence Update and Consultation

Phil McVey presented on the progress of the work on the Convergence programme, identifying the policy context, programme strategy, priorities and themes and the next steps. Any investment under Convergence has to improve the competitive base of Cornwall, the EU are also interested in what we can do to remove apparent disparities.

Although Convergence will be influenced by Strategy and Action, and the RES, it is a European programme and therefore it will not achieve everything that we want to do. As the funds are now to be operated through four separate funds it is important to hold onto the connectivity between these to ensure we get the maximum results from the intervention. The objective of the programme is to move Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to being the first knowledge based economy in a rural area.

AM advised that there is concern relating to the proposed split of funds between ESF and ERDF. It was felt that it was not the correct balance. He proposed that the ESF amount should be less than proposed as he felt that the DWP were using the funding to subsidise core activity. He added that the intervention rate was also an issue as the Treasury has no money to support this, it should be 50% rather than 75%. CCC is taking a position on this and will be looking for support from other organisations as the intervention rate as it stands could cost CCC £250million.

PM stated that the reason Cornwall has the specified split of ESF and ERDF of 70/30 is that the County has pockets of deprivation which really need this sort of intervention. The consultation asks the question of intervention and also asks what other public bodies funds are available. PJ added that the agenda around higher skills and people is intensive and without the money to support this within the programme we will be unable to achieve the requirements.

BB expressed concerns regarding the strain on the rural economy of sustaining a greater population, of the increased focus on towns and also of the exclusion of private sector within the funding. He felt that a big part of the success of Objective One was due to partnership working between the public, private and voluntary sectors, and preventing financial investment from the private sector could lead to them disengaging. PM responded by advising that the private sector would not be excluded from involvement, but there is a technical issue with inclusion of private sector funds within the European Programme financial tables, but it will not exclude them from the programme.

CW asked for an example of another area where the 75/25 funding rate had been successful, PM was unable to comment as no other programmes have yet been approved.

Discussion ensued regarding various aspects of the programme including a low carbon economy, and upskilling for economic growth.

The Chairman thanked the members for the debate.

## **8 Date of Next Meetings**

Single issue debate re Strategy and Action  
21 February 2007 10.00am  
23 May 2007 10.30am  
5 September 2007 10.00am  
28 November 2007 10.30am

Tbc  
Trelawney Room, NCH  
Council Chambers, NCH  
Trelawney Room, NCH  
Tbc

(The meeting closed at 1 pm)