

Notes of the 6th Quarterly Hull Business Forum
Wednesday 13 April 2005
Staff House, University of Hull

PRESENT

Tom Hadkiss (Chair).

105 members and guests were present.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Tom Hadkiss welcomed members to the 6th Quarterly Hull Business Forum focusing on Hull's 2020 economic vision.

BUSINESS FORUM UPDATE

A report was tabled which updated Forum members on progress and actions from previous Quarterly Forum meetings. Key points included:

- **North Bridge** (January 2005 Forum) – despite some additional local congestion, the overall traffic management had been successful. The Council had praised businesses and other partners for their support in minimising the impacts.
- **Procurement** (January 2005 Forum) – Forum presented a paper to Cityeconomy recommending additional business support provision to help local companies.
- **Forum elections** (January 2005 Forum) – Mike Pullon of Computanet was elected as a business representative on the Citylearning partnership.
- **Education** (October 2004 Forum) – Hull's Local Education Authority had a much improved OFSTED inspection, with particularly praise for business partnership work.
- **Gateway Pathfinder** (July 2004 Forum) – initial Government funding of £15m had been announced.
- **Citybuild** (July 2004 Forum) – Phase II of Island Wharf planned with private sector investment.

HULL'S ECONOMIC CHALLENGE

The Business Forum Manager gave a presentation to set the scene on Hull's economic challenge. It was noted that there were a series of key strategy consultations in 2005 including:

- **Hull Community Strategy** – overarching city strategy to be developed by Cityvision.
- **Hull Local Transport Plan** – Hull City Council's 5-year strategy on highways, public transport, cycling facilities etc.
- **Hull & Humber Ports City-Region Development Plan** – one of eight 'city-region' strategies as part of the 'Northern Way' concept to close the North-South £30bn productivity gap.
- **Regional Economic Strategy** – Regional Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward led, strategy to transform economic performance of Yorkshire and the Humber.

It was highlighted that the city had key headline targets to fill a jobs gap of 15,000 and business gap of 1,600. The Business Forum Manager indicated that the key purpose of this meeting was to develop strong business input into these consultations. A series of key questions were highlighted: What is Hull for? What are the key drivers of the local economy? What needs to be delivered? What are the quick wins to show progress?

'TRANSFORMING HULL'S ECONOMY' PANEL DISCUSSION

Tom Hadkiss chaired a panel discussion featuring Prof Mike Jackson, Dean of the University of Hull Business School; Tony Cosgrove, MD of Nortech and business representative on the Cityvision Board; Malcolm Relph, Group Manager Strategic Programmes at Development and Renewal Services of Hull City Council; and Dr Ian Kelly, Chief Executive of Hull & Humber Chamber of Commerce.

Prof Jackson began by commenting on the positive role that the Business School can play in the development of local businesses. He also highlighted that the Business Schools Institute for Logistics investment would help grow the local economy by strengthening one of the areas key sectors. Ian Kelly reviewed Hull's position in the region and expressed the view that the city was making good progress that often went unrecognised.

Malcolm Relph commented that the city had a huge task to create the number of new jobs and businesses needed to build a strong economy. He also highlighted that regional strategies were important to Hull as they shaped Government investment decisions. The Northern Way presented Hull with an opportunity to 'punch its weight' and develop its niche in the economy of the North.

Tony Cosgrove commented that young people were crucial to the future success of the city, and that their aspirations needed to be raised. He commented that businesses had a role to play in developing young people and praised the work of organisations such as Young Enterprise.

The debate was opened up to members. Michael Oughtred commented that the consistent success of their business was due to first class product development, knowledge and skills. His comments that the city needed to look outwards to identify how Hull could tap into the future growth sectors in the UK economy were widely endorsed by members. It was felt that Hull's key strengths lay in industries such as the Port and food. Frederick Mole expressed the view that many people and companies made their money away from Hull, although it was recognised that there were lots of successful profitable businesses in the city, both trading locally and indeed globally.

Sue Dobbs commented on the need to build strong links between businesses and local schools and Prof Jackson highlighted the key role of the University in working with local companies. Tony Cosgrove stated that it was important to develop a more business friendly planning system which encouraged local investment. Malcolm Relph indicated that the Council recognised how planning could support economic development and that progress was being made.

Members discussed the role of Hull within initiatives such as the Northern Way and agreed that ports and logistics provided opportunities for future economic growth. Richard Brough highlighted the need to develop road and rail infrastructure to maximise this opportunity and that decisions on developments such as Quay 2005 need to be made much faster.

There was a discussion about whether Hull's focus should be on attracting investment, growing existing businesses or promoting enterprise. It was generally felt that Hull needed to go for all three, although inward investment was not provide all the answers for the economy. Tony Cosgrove also emphasised the need for keep as much businesses locally from the '£1bn regeneration' projects, with the appropriate local skills development to back this up.

The discussion was closed, with a further opportunity to consider the issues in table workshops later in the meeting.

HULL COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Hull Cityvision Manager Rachael Mather gave members a presentation on the process for the development of a new Community Strategy for Hull. She highlighted that work would be undertaken to produce a 15-20 year vision for the city which would include employment and economy as key issues. She indicated that a clearer overall vision and fewer separate strategy documents were needed. Businesses would have a key role to play in both shaping the strategy and then working with other Cityvision partners on delivery.

The following points were made by members in the ensuing discussion:

- Hull has lots of strategies – delivery is now the key.
- Businesses have a real opportunity to have their say and get involved.
- The city needs to aim higher than in the past and be ambitious.
- Public, private and community sector partners all had specific roles to play.
- The vision would be supported by a detailed delivery / business plan.
- Members were invited to sign a petition on short term Castle Street improvements.

YOUNG ENTERPRISE

Tom Hadkiss invited Janet Brumby, Young Enterprise Development Manager, to highlight their work in promoting business and enterprise skills in local young people. Janet Brumby highlighted that Young Enterprise ran a range of different programmes for young people of all ages, which included the high profile company programme. It was highlighted that a crucial part of the learning process was for young people to work with business advisors and more volunteers were constantly needed.

Sean Scott, Managing Director of Avian Enterprise, described his experiences in establishing and running a Young Enterprise company with fellow students from Hymers College. He explained how the company identified their market, developed and marketed their product (bird feeders) and managed different aspects of their business. He commented that the company would shortly enter the Young Enterprise company programme competition and highlighted that they had developed a range of business and teamwork skills.

Tom Hadkiss commended Avian and other Young Enterprise companies and highlighted that they were the people that would determine the future success of the city and they needed to be encouraged and supported.

'ECONOMY' TABLE WORKSHOPS

Members were provided with a series of questions and a feedback form and broke off to have more detailed discussions on their tables regarding Hull's economic visioning which would then form the basis of the Business Forum's input into the key strategies highlighted earlier.

UNIVERSITY OF HULL BUSINESS SCHOOL

Prof Mike Jackson gave members a presentation on the University of Hull Business School. He reported that it was one of 100 in the country and was 'top ten' ranked. It was noted that £9m worth of investment was going into the refurbishment of buildings and premises on the West campus.

The Business School was established in 1999 and now has 2000 undergraduate students, 850 of whom are from overseas. The Business School worked closely with other local organisations to promote graduate entrepreneurship. The Business School has an external business unit which has a corporate partners scheme to be launched

in Business Week in June 2005. Prof Jackson reported on the exciting development of an Institute of Logistics with the support of the Council, Hull College and other partners, which fitted in well with the Northern Way Strategy.

Tom Hadkiss thanked Prof Jackson for his presentation and indicated that the Forum would seek to work closely with the Business School in the future.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The 7th Quarterly Hull Business Forum would be held on 20th July 2005 at 4.30pm.

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Postscript: The Forum's full responses to the Community Strategy, Local Transport Plan and Regional Economic Strategy are available from n.pontone@hullbusinessforum.com