

PRESENT

Tony Cosgrove (Chair).

70 members and guests were present.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Business Forum Vice-Chair David Burnby reported that Tony Cosgrove of Nortech had been elected by the Steering Group to succeed Tom Hadkiss as Chair of Hull Business Forum. Tony Cosgrove then took the Chair for the meeting.

HULL COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Business Forum Manager, Nick Pontone, updated members on the development of Hull's new Community Strategy. It was reported that since the 7th Quarterly Forum in July, the Forum had completed the business input into the 'have your say in Hull's future' survey and held a Business Focus Group meeting in August (copies of the minutes were available on request). It was noted that a draft Community Strategy had been developed which included the key priorities of jobs & economy; education & skills; and quality of life. This new focus on a smaller number of key priorities was welcomed. Members were thanked for the substantial input the Forum had made to the process over the past six months.

CRIME AND POLICING IN HULL

Tony Cosgrove welcomed Chief Supt Sean White of Humberside Police who made a presentation on crime and policing issues in Hull.

As a member of the Cityvision Local Strategic Partnership Board, Chief Supt White commented that he recognised that the future prospects of the city were inextricably linked to the economy. It was noted that the links between crime and prosperity were well established and that business and the economy were important factors on crime rates.

Chief Supt White stated that he had been in post as Police Commander for Hull since December 2004 and that in total 900 staff worked under him of which circa 450 were Police officers and 120 Special Constables. He highlighted that local community policing was at the heart of Humberside Police's strategy. He recognised that 'business mattered' and the 'economy mattered' because crime can fall when the economy does well. He therefore welcomed the economic and educational priorities of the new Community Strategy which could help tackle the root causes of some crime.

Chief Supt White indicated that business crime was perhaps the 'cinderella of policing' in that there was few national targets and performance indicators for such crime. However, he explained a number of key areas that Humberside Police were tackling that were of importance to the business community. He commented that the city centre was Hull's 'shop window' and the Police were therefore striving to help make it a thriving mixed day and evening economy with measures to tackle under-age drinking and alcohol related crime. He also welcomed the new Ambassadors for the city centre who would operate in a similar way to the successful Wardens in other parts of the city. It was also noted that the new licencing laws would have an impact on the evening economy in particular.

Chief Supt White concluded by assuring Members that Humberside Police took business crime seriously, and that at a strategic level the Police were supporting economic development priorities. He invited businesses to advise the Police on how they felt crime could be better tackled.

Members asked a range of questions including how local businesses could support the work of the Police. Chief Supt White noted that they already did so through business rates and by implementing schemes such as 'business watch' which could operate successfully in a similar way to Neighbourhood Watch. Members also asked about the role of Wardens and what was being done to prevent crime. Chief Supt White commented that Wardens, along with Community Support Officers, were important in that they could help get officers out onto the streets, helping to build confidence and knowledge in local neighbourhoods. In relation to crime prevention, Chief Supt White highlighted the measures being taken to tackle drugs issues and also projects with ex-offenders working with schools to raise their awareness of the dangers of criminality. There was also discussion about issues such as the effectiveness of the criminal justice system and the work of the Retail Crime Partnership.

The Chair thanked Chief Supt White for his presentation and members were invited to submit any further thoughts or views either direct to Chief Supt White or via the Forum 'notepad' which had been circulated.

WILBERFORCE 2007

Lou Duffy-Howard and Mitch Upfold from the Wilberforce 2007 project team gave members a presentation on the plans to commemorate the 200th anniversary since Hull MP William Wilberforce's Bill to abolish the slave trade was passed by Parliament.

Lou Duffy-Howard reported that a range of local partners were working together to develop a Wilberforce 2007 programme which would reflect the international importance of the bi-centenary. The campaign led by Wilberforce was in many ways the world's first human rights campaign and the issues still resonated today. A range of projects were already underway such as the £3.7 million refurbishment of Wilberforce House and the WISE project led by the University of Hull. It was intended that such projects would leave a legacy for Hull after 2007.

Lou Duffy-Howard commented that other UK cities with historic links to the slave trade such as Liverpool and Bristol planned to commemorate the bi-centenary, however, Hull could be proud of the unique role it played in the abolition of the slave trade. A Partnership had been established to drive forward the programme and a range of specific project groups were looking at aspects such as community, learning etc. The Forum and Chamber had offered to lead a Business Project Group and members were encouraged to contribute to this group. It was noted that any businesses who wanted to get involved in this way should contact Nick Pontone (n.pontone@hullbusinessforum.com).

A number of ideas about how to get businesses involved had already come forward including using the Wilberforce 2007 logo/website on e-mails or letterheads, sponsorship of key events, promotion of fair trade products, displaying Wilberforce flags/banners and perhaps a Wilberforce trade exhibition. Mitch Upfold highlighted that there were a range of events and activities in the programme and that planning was crucial as the city had only one chance to get it right.

It was noted that the Wilberforce 2007 website (www.wilberforce2007.co.uk) would be launched in the next week at the Cityimage breakfast meeting.

Members asked questions including the possibility of a major international 'Live8' style rock concert in Hull and the funding of the Wilberforce House refurbishment. It was noted that there was possibility for a major concert but that it needed to stack up financially and practically. Lou Duffy-Howard indicated that Heritage Lottery Fund support and other external funding had been attracted to Hull for the Wilberforce House refurbishment.

The Chair commented that Wilberforce 2007 presented a major opportunity for Hull and that partners needed to 'think big' to make the most of it. He thanked Mitch Upfold and Lou Duffy-Howard for their presentation and encouraged members to get involved in the Business Project Group.

HULL LOCAL RADIO

Paul Sewell, Chair of Hull Local Radio, and Sean Bell made a presentation on their bid to win a new local radio franchise for the Hull area.

Paul Sewell reported that he had agreed to Chair the consortium of local and national players under the Hull Local Radio banner. He reported that there were 500,000 adults in the wider Hull area which was a significant local audience not being properly served by existing provision. Broadcasters such as Viking targeted the younger audience and it was felt there was a gap in the market for a 'local Radio 2' type proposition, which would also be attractive to local businesses from an advertising perspective.

After a successful lobby to OFCOM, a licence would be awarded in May 2006. A number of bidders, including Hull Local Radio, had had several test transmissions. Further market research would be carried out before the bid was submitted.

BUSINESS WEEK 2006 HULL & EAST RIDING

Paul Sewell also updated members on the plans for Business Week 2006 (first week of June 2006) which would again include Chamber Expo on the Tuesday and Wednesday, a Business/Education conference on the Thursday and Yorkshire International Business Convention on the Friday.

Paul Sewell highlighted that the intention was to make it bigger and better than 2005 but more business input and support was needed, in addition to the public sector/QUANGO backing this year.

The Chair thanked Paul Sewell for his contributions on both Hull Local Radio and Business Week 2006.

HUMBER BUSINESS TELEVISION

Alan Mumby from Broadband Capital, the company behind 'Stream', the new Humber Business TV project, showed members an exclusive promo ahead of the 2006 launch of Humber Business TV. He also commented that the Humber was playing a leading role in local TV with Channel 7 on the southbank, KIT and the BBC investment. Humber Business TV would be a mixture of streamed and archived material which would include business news and company profiles, workforce development content and other programming.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The 9th Quarterly Hull Business Forum would be held on 31st January 2006 at 4.30pm.

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