

**Notes of the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Hull Business Forum  
Tuesday 31 January 2006  
Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Willerby, Hull**

**PRESENT**

Tony Cosgrove (Chair).

131 members and guests were present.

**WELCOME AND BUSINESS FORUM UPDATE**

The Chair welcomed members to the 9<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Hull Business Forum. He introduced the Business Forum Manager, Nick Pontone, who gave members an update on various Forum issues.

Steering Group elections – Nick Pontone highlighted that nomination papers for the Business Forum Steering Group had been circulated and that five nominations had been received for the four available places. He stated that the Steering Group were recommending to the Forum to amend the constitution to increase to size of the Steering Group to 16 members. This was unanimously agreed and the following members were elected to the Steering Group:

- John Sharp, IRC
- Mark Hathway, National Locums
- Neil Cavill, npower
- Tony Anson, Gelder and Kitchen
- Jonathan Leafe, Strawberry

A63 Castle Street – Nick Pontone reported that progress was being made on interim measures on Castle Street including the banning of right turns at the Lowgate junction and a scheme may be delivered later in 2006 or 2007. Progress on an improved crossing at Princes Dock Street was slower although dialogue continued between the Highways Agency, Hull City Council and Hull Citybuild.

Nick Pontone reported on positive developments on the long term 'cut and cover' scheme which city partners were strongly backing. He commented that the scheme had been confirmed as a 'regional' route and had recently been adopted as a top regional priority by the new Regional Transport Board who provisionally allocated funding from 2011/12. However, it was noted that the scheme had many hurdles to overcome in the coming years before any construction began.

Wilberforce 2007 – Nick Pontone reported that a new Wilberforce Business Project Group had met and invited other interested members to get involved if they wished to do so. He commented that amongst the projects that the Business Project Group were specifically looking at included a Wilberforce stamp issued by the Royal Mail and the cleaning and lighting of the Wilberforce statue.

Hull Business Forum website – the new Hull Business Forum website ([www.hullbusinessforum.com](http://www.hullbusinessforum.com)) was launched. Nick Pontone highlighted its key features and encouraged all members to use the site for news, events and information, and particularly to submit views and comments. Paul Cowell of Worldwide Websights who built the site, highlighted to members some of technical aspects.

## **RENEWING THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

The Chair introduced Cllr Kath Lavery, Chair of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) who gave members an overview on progress of the Community Strategy and re-structuring of the LSP.

Cllr Lavery thanked members for the support they continued to give the LSP and highlighted that Hull Business Forum was recognised as the best in the country at engaging businesses in the work of LSPs. She reviewed the key role that the LSP played in the regeneration and renewal of the city and particularly highlighted the importance of the new Community Strategy, 'Living, Learning and Working 2006-11'. It was noted that the key priorities of the new strategy were:

- Jobs and prosperity;
- Education and skills; and
- Quality of Life.

Cllr Lavery reported that the new Community Strategy had a much stronger delivery focus than normal for such documents and it set out a series of stretching targets across the key priority areas for Hull to catch up with other parts of the country. She highlighted that the LSP itself was being refreshed to be fit for purpose and deliver the new Community Strategy. She thanked businesses for the active role they had played in the partnership to date and encouraged them to participate in the new priority theme groups which would support the new Delivery Board. Paul Sewell of the Sewell Group and Mark Willett of EC Harris had recently been appointed to the new Delivery Board and the new strategic City Partnership would meet for the first time within the next month and have ten private sector members. Cllr Lavery concluded by emphasising the important role that the business community had to play in the new LSP and encouraged businesses to get involved where possible.

## **YOUNG ENTERPRISE**

The Chair invited Glen Little of A Little Marketing and Training to explain the importance and value of being a volunteer Young Enterprise advisor. Glen Little indicated that being an advisor was a very rewarding and enjoyable experience which had also provided a number of networking opportunities. He encouraged fellow members, or perhaps their staff, to get involved and indicated that anyone interested should speak to Janet Brumby, Young Enterprise Development Manager (jebyoungent@aol.com).

Janet Brumby introduced three Young Enterprise companies who were in Years 10 or 12 and set up and ran their own company for an academic year as part of the company programme. She highlighted the excellent track record of Hull And East Riding companies in the Young Enterprise competition including KH Smilers and Avian Enterprise in the past two years. The following Young Enterprise companies exhibited and made short presentations to the Forum:

- One Step Closer from Hull Collegiate School who had already turned over nearly £10,000 mainly by producing and selling engraved bricks as part of the new site development at Hull Collegiate School.
- DeccAccor-Xtek from Hymers College who brought together two divisions into a single company and made products including 'shoe removers'.
- YEAHH from Hessle High School who products included t-shirts. YEAHH held a business card prize draw which was won by Liz Young of Edwin Snowden.

The Chair also welcomed KH Smilers who were a Young Enterprise company from Kelvin Hall School who won through to the national finals two years ago and had since continued as a limited company. KH Smilers were also attending and exhibiting at the meeting.

The Chair thanked the Young Enterprise companies for their presentations, congratulated them on their progress to date and wished their businesses every success for the rest of the year.

## **HULL CITY CENTRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

The Chair invited Ken Baldwin, City Centre BID Manager, to make a presentation on the Business Improvement District (BID) concept for the city centre.

Ken Baldwin highlighted that he had forty years experience in retailing, mainly in Hull, and that he had returned to the city to lead the campaign to win a BID for the city centre. He explained that a BID was a partnership between the local authority and businesses to deliver additional services to improve an area in terms of safety, cleanliness, promotion etc.

Ken Baldwin explained that with exciting developments such as St Stephens, Quay West, Humber Quays and The Boom, there was a need to make sure the rest of the city centre was at a similar level in terms of quality. The objective therefore was to operate the city centre like a shopping centre in terms of its management but 'without the roof'. He argued that the BID was the 'cement between the bricks' to bring together the city centre as it developed and expanded over the coming years.

Ken Baldwin reviewed the five key areas which the BID would address:

1. Improve safety and security:
  - Including 'Ambassadors' who had helped cut crime by 34% since November 2005 and were also 'meeters and greeters' to visitors to Hull.
2. Improve streetscene and maintenance:
  - Perhaps including a 'rapid response team' for fly-posting, graffiti removal etc.
3. Improve marketing and events:
  - Perhaps including a 'Hull Smile' customer service campaign, new markets in the city centre and an improved events programme.
4. Bring a better mix to the evening economy:
  - Perhaps including the roll out of the 'Best Bar None' campaign and 'taxi marshalls' to avoid trouble in night time taxi queues.
5. Improve signage:
  - Perhaps including banners and 'welcome to Hull' signs as well as improving the visual image of empty retail units.

It was emphasised that these services would be over and above what the Council currently provided and the funding would be owned and managed by the businesses themselves. The funding would be raised by a 1% levy on rateable values if the BID was backed in a referendum of all businesses in the BID area, probably held in October 2006. To win the BID, over 50% of votes was needed as well as over 50% of the rateable values. All businesses would pay in the event of a successful referendum. Ken Baldwin highlighted that 20 business communities across the UK had so far backed a BID, with four areas rejecting it. It was envisaged that the levy would raise circa £500k per year which could be match funded.

Members asked a number of questions including whether the BID could address transport issues to improve access to the city centre; the link between the BID and broader tourism and image promotion of the city; and potential of new markets. Ken Baldwin highlighted that access was an important issue although travelling into to Hull city centre was relatively easier than many other cities. He also commented that there was real potential to add new life and vibrancy to parts of the city centre with new markets, which could bring in additional visitors and revenue.

Members were encouraged to provide further thoughts by completing and returning a short questionnaire on the concept which had been tabled. The Chair thanked Ken Baldwin for his presentation.

### **HUMBER BRIDGE SILVER JUBILEE**

The Chair introduced John Gilbert who was marketing the Silver Jubilee celebrations since the opening of the Humber Bridge. He outlined that the 'Humber Bridge Bash' was a four day programme of events in July 2006 and included activities on both banks of the bridge including a world record abseil, Business Olympics and free entertainment. It was expected that the series of events would attract significant interest and visitor numbers and there were numerous sponsorship and commercial opportunities offered by the programme. A range of charitable activities also formed part of the programme. The Chair strongly welcomed the initiative and highlighted that it provided a major opportunity to raise the profile of the area.

Members asked whether Humber Bridge tolls would be suspended for the four days of the 'bash'. Peter Hill, the Bridgmaster, indicated that the Board were unable to do so and explained the issues related to the bridge debt and tolls.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Hull Business Forum would be held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2006 at 4.30pm.

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