

Business Advisory Group

Wednesday 3rd September 2008. 8am – 10am.

34 / 38 Beverley Road

Minutes



PRESENT

Barry Schofield (in the Chair)	Tuttys Office Interiors
Andy Lawrence	StaintonWard Ltd
Alan Gordon-Freeman	Sirius
Jeff Clarkson	Clarkson Business Strategy
Christine Ware	High 10
Pam Cavanagh	Latitude
John Roberts	Destinova Consulting
John Britton	BCG Bridgepoint
Colin Booth	ScanSource UK
Darren Glew	Eltherington Aluminium
Tim Evison	Eon Media
Nick Miller	Graham & Rosen
Ken Baldwin	Hull BID
Paul Fielder	Lime Property
Bob Ferraby	Hull City Council
Ben Delaney	Ben Delaney

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Apologies for Absence

232. Apologies were received from Gordon Shields, Robin Pegden, Graham Boanas, Victoria Blenkarn, Paula Litten and Tracey Taylor.

Agenda Item 2: Minutes

233. The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2nd July 2008 were agreed as a true and correct record.

Agenda Item 3: Matters Arising

234. Barry Schofield gave an update on recent Park and Ride developments. He said that information he had received from Councillor John Robinson following the previous meeting indicated that the eastern site would most likely be developed first as the Council owns the land. Also circulated was a press article reporting a similar view.

Agenda Item 4: Working Neighbourhood Fund Projects

235. The Chair introduced Bob Ferraby, Investment Programmes Manager at Hull City Council. Bob Ferraby explained that Hull had been allocated £38 million of Working Neighbourhood Funding over the next 3 years and this was replacing Neighbourhood

Renewal Fund and the Area Based Grant and would be primarily spent trying to meet Hull's LAA 2 targets.

236. Bob Ferraby gave details of 6 projects which had been put forward for Working Neighbourhood Funding; Local Work Guarantee, Making Changes For Careers, BRITE, Positive Youth, Hull Telecare Cluster and the 25 – 39 Employment Initiative.

237. Following Bob Ferraby's presentation a discussion followed regarding the need for higher level skills and improved work related experience especially in young people. It was acknowledged that Hull had an excellent University and more should be done to keep its graduates in the city following graduation. Bob Ferraby responded that the Local Work Guarantee would keep more graduates in the city as they could enrol on the programme which would then help them find employment.

238. It was agreed that Hull needed to improve the skill level of its workforce but that wage subsidy schemes were not always the best way forward as some employers are happy to provide training or employment via such schemes but don't want to continue doing so once funding has stopped and they are required to pay full costs for employees.

239. John Britton agreed that whilst skills had a significant role to play in business development and competitiveness, a good business plan was vital and many businesses lacked this.

240. Pam Cavanagh pointed out that not all entrepreneurs were graduates and whilst increasing the number of people with level 4 skills in the city was necessary, entrepreneurship and graduate retention were not necessarily reliant on each other.

241. Nick Miller said that in the past the Council had tended to support larger companies and spend more effort on attracting them to the area. Whilst this was a good policy, it was also important that SME's were given all the necessary support in order for them to develop and grow into larger companies employing more people. Appropriate business premises were an important factor in this support.

242. Nick Miller asked how the Construction Works project working to fill St Stephens' vacancies had impacted on the city's employment statistics. Bob Ferraby replied that the effect had been quite substantial with around 1500 people finding work through the project in St Stephen's.

242. Jeff Clarkson asked about the current situation with the construction workers who had built St Stephen's. Bob Ferraby replied that most of the big construction projects in Hull recently had been carried out by companies from outside of the area as Hull had no construction companies capable of constructing such substantial projects. The local businesses who had worked on local projects such as the KC Stadium or St Stephen's were usually subcontracted to undertake smaller jobs.

Agenda Item 5: BID / Business Advisory Group City Centre Mini-Manifesto

243. Ken Baldwin had met with the Leader of the Council Carl Minns and a small group of local independent traders. He said that the meeting was a positive discussion about the Council's strategy for supporting independent shops and they had talked about the role of Whitefriargate as a home for small and independent businesses. He added that Councillor Minns was receptive to the views of the businesses and further meetings would take place.

244. Ken Baldwin said the Whitefriargate area was still classified as a Zone A area which meant that rates payable by businesses were high and this prevented smaller businesses from moving to the street. A proposed solution to the empty units on Whitefriargate was a reduction in the rates payable by businesses.

245. The city centre evening economy was also discussed. Ken Baldwin said that the lack of taxis was a barrier to the development of the evening economy and he hoped that the Council would be looking at this issue in their 2009 transport study. It was acknowledged that the Fruit Market and Boom developments would increase the number of people living in and around the city centre and this would bring positive benefits.

Agenda Item 6: Open Forum

246. The Chair asked members to contact Ben Delaney if they had any issues which they would like to see on future agendas.

Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business

247. There was no other business

Agenda Item 8: Dates of Next Meeting

248. The next meeting of the Business Advisory Group will be held on Monday 3rd November at 12 noon.