

## **MINUTES: Steering Group**

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**Quality Royal Hotel, Hull**



### **PRESENT**

Tony Cosgrove (Chair)

Barry Schofield

John Sharp

Jonathan Leafe

John Britton

Gordon Shields

Linda Ellis

Nick Pontone

### **Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

911. Apologies were received from Ian Kelly, Paul Burnley and Richard Tuplin.

### **Agenda Item 2: Minutes**

912. The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010 were agreed as a true and correct record.

### **Agenda Item 3: Matters Arising**

913. Procurement – John Britton reported that his company was working with partners to develop a project to support local suppliers to compete more effectively for public sector contracts. It was noted that the project would be seeking funding from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP).

914. Barry Schofield and Tony Cosgrove reported on the recent Learning Lunch the Forum had organised on the topic of Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQs). The Steering Group expressed some concern that the PQQ process was used as an initial filter of businesses tendering for contracts and that companies tenders were often rejected if they did not meet technical criteria. It was agreed to continue to work positively with Hull City Council and others to try to maximise local procurement.

915. Quarterly Business Forum programme – it was noted that Dermot Finch, Director of the Centre of Cities had accepted the invitation to speak at the Quarterly Forum in July.

916. Whitefriargate – Nick Pontone reported that he understood a 'Whitefriargate Manager' would not be appointed as had previously been proposed. Barry Schofield commented that Hull Forward would be presenting their action plan for Whitefriargate at the next meeting of the Business Advisory Group.

917. The future of regeneration organisations such as Hull Forward and Yorkshire Forward were discussed. It was noted that there was considerable uncertainty in the current national political and financial climate. However, it was reported that Conservative plans to scrap all regional development agencies had now been amended, and local authorities in a region could choose to keep an RDA if they felt it was an effective way to organise economic development. This was a possibility for Yorkshire and the Humber which may be attractive given the support the RDA had given to industrial development in sectors such as energy.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Steering Group**

918. Nick Pontone reviewed the background to the structure of the Business Forum which comprised of quarterly Forum meetings open to any local business; and elected steering group of 15 members to manage the activities of the Forum; and a Business Advisory Group to support the work of the Earning Partnership. The current Service Level Agreement which funded the Business Forum ran until March 2011, however there was uncertainty about the future of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund which funded the Forum.

919. Nick Pontone reported that the Forum was scheduled to elect five new steering group members in April but said this process had been put on hold pending a wider review of the steering group and Forum structure. Members discussed the role of the steering group and generally agreed that its workload had reduced over time as the activities of the Forum had become well established. It was noted that a refreshed Business Advisory Group had an important role supporting the Earning Partnership, which was a role the steering group would originally have performed.

920. Members agreed that the steering group still had an important role in organising more dynamic and relevant quarterly Forum meetings. It was felt that more time needed to be spent on briefing speakers and following up actions. Members also agreed that time should be spent gathering views and input from local businesses about their issues and priorities. This would be particularly important later in the year because a new Community Strategy would be published.

921. The steering group noted the wider political uncertainty at the present time and agreed that it would be sensible to postpone the election of new steering group elections until the future role of the group became more certain. The existing steering group would continue in the interim and its priorities would include improving the effectiveness of quarterly Forum meetings to make the 'must attend' events. It would also focus on gathering views of the wider membership ahead of the new Community Strategy. The Business Leaders Group previously agreed would also support this process.

922. It was agreed that:

- Thanks would be expressed to the steering group members who had indicated they would be standing down;
- The steering group meetings immediately prior to quarterly Forum would in future be held circa two weeks before the quarterly meetings and focus on the agenda and briefing of speakers;
- The Forum should more actively seek to increase its media profile, particularly in relation to the quarterly meetings;
- A strategy for future funding options be explored in the event that the LSP no longer be in position to provide financial support for the Business Forum.

- A note be prepared on the roles and responsibilities of key organisations and partners in Hull.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Manager's Report and ONE HULL Updates**

923. Business Advisory Group – this issue had been covered earlier in the meeting.

924. ONE HULL Executive Group – Tony Cosgrove indicated that the Peer Review into worklessness would take place in the next few weeks. The Forum were actively supporting this process through the Earning Partnership.

#### **Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business**

925. There was no other business

#### **Agenda Item 10: Dates of future meetings**

926. Steering Group: Tuesday 18th May 2010, 12 noon