

Tees Valley Joint Strategy Committee

A meeting of the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Committee was held on Monday, 10th April 2006.

Present: Councillor Budd (Chairman).

Representing Darlington Borough Council: Councillors Lyonette, Richmond and Scott.

Representing Hartlepool Borough Council: Councillors Coward and Waller.

Representing Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council: Councillors Dunning, Empson, Moody and Smith.

Representing Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council: Councillors Cherrett, Cook and Lupton.

Officers: D Pearce, J Lowther (Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit), P K Bell (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council), G Thompson (Hartlepool Borough Council) P Furniss (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council).

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Allison, Brady, Collins, Larkin, Mawston, Payne, Preece, Teasdale, Thompson, Wallis, Ward, Williams.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Cook declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in respect of the agenda item no.6 – Tees Valley City Region Programme on the grounds of his employment within the chemical industry.

Councillor Dunning declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item no.6 – Tees Valley City Region Programme as a result of his son's employment within the chemical industry.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 16th December 2005 and the Special Meeting held on 30th January 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

North East Regional Spatial Strategy Revision: Examination in Public

The Director of the Joint Strategy Unit updated Members on the North East Regional Spatial Strategy: Examination in Public. He outlined that what the Tees Valley wanted had been generally accepted.

With regard the net housing requirement in the Tees Valley, 29,000 had been accepted and possibly 33,000.

The issue of development on green field development was not supported with it being decided that development should be on brown field sites. This included prestige employment sites. There was support for the Durham/Tees Valley Airport, transport and retail. There was no support for a green belt.

It was outlined that Jim Johnson had done an excellent job for the Tees Valley and there was credit to people in the North East. The North East had shown that it was co-ordinated and working together.

The next stage would be a report that would be produced in August 2006.

The Chairman felt that this was good justification why the Tees Valley has a Joint Strategy Unit and all Members agreed with this comment.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber: Draft for Public Consultation

Consideration was given to a report on a new draft Yorkshire and the Humber RSS that had been issued for consultation. An Examination in Public into the draft Strategy would be held in autumn this year. The draft RSS recognised the role and function of the Tees Valley City Region and in particular it:

- Restrains market housing development to support regeneration and growth in the Tees Valley City Region and reduce long distance commuting;
- Focuses most new development in Principal Service Centres;
- Focuses new housing development, outside the Principal Service Centres, mainly on meeting affordable housing needs;
- Supports ongoing improvements to the A1(M), A19 and East Coast Main Line, and
- Seeks to develop good local transport links between the Principal Service centres and their catchment areas.

There were a number of concerns however that it was felt should be drawn to the attention of the Examination in Public Panel:

- The scale of market housing proposed in Hambleton District and its possible effect on the aim of stemming out-migration from the Tees Valley and reducing unsustainable commuting patterns;
- The need to ensure that employment land provision in Hambleton and Richmondshire Districts essentially meets local needs and should complement employment land provision in the Tees Valley;
- The need for greater recognition of cross-boundary transport issues.

RESOLVED that representations be made to the Panel Secretary of the Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Spatial Strategy Examination in Public covering the following issues:

- i) that the Yorkshire and the Humber RSS should provide for greater restriction on market housing provision in the northern part of Hambleton District in recognition of the function of the Tees Valley City Region as focus for new housing development, to reduce out-migration from the Tees Valley, and to decrease levels of longer distance commuting;
- ii) that the Yorkshire and the Humber RSS should specifically acknowledge the relationship between the Tees Valley sub-region and parts of North Yorkshire to ensure that employment land provision in Hambleton and Richmondshire serves local requirements and complements provision in the Tees Valley, and
- iii) that the Yorkshire and the Humber RSS gives further recognition to cross-boundary transport issues, including the public transport corridor from the Whitby/Esk Valley area to the Tees Valley, freight implications, and the role and impact of Durham Tees Valley Airport and Tees port.

Tees Valley City Region Development Programme – Progress Report and Programme

Consideration was given to a report which was submitted to the Northern Way Secretariat and presented to the Northern Way Summit in York in February. The report was primarily information and showed the progress that is being made in the delivery of the programme and taking forward the programme into an investment strategy and second iteration which is due for submission in September.

The report set out progress on the implementation of the City Region Development Programme and the work programme to the end of September 2006 to produce the second iteration of the programme. A key task had been to embed the CRDP proposals into the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Funding Allocation proposals.

In terms of implementation there had been major progress:

- £875 m of investment was underway in the chemicals industry with the potential to create 1,000 jobs
- Major proposals were being developed with the private sector in the renewable energy sector
- PD Ports had been preparing the case for their Northern Gateway deep-sea container port proposal and expect to submit a planning application shortly. In the meantime Asda were constructing a £20 million import centre at the port
- A brief for resources to prepare a Transport Innovation Fund bid for gauge enhancement of the ECML to Tees port had been prepared
- An application for a new terminal and business park at Durham Tees Valley Airport had been submitted
- Construction of a second phase of the incubation facilities at Netpark would begin shortly and the master plan for Netpark had been completed
- The University of Teesside had the resources to shortly begin the first stage of its Digital City project, the Institute of Digital Innovation
- The University of Durham had submitted its application for assistance to construct an extension to the Wolfson Research Centre
- At Central Park Darlington the new college of technology was under construction and Tees Valley Regeneration had obtained planning permission for the scheme
- At Victoria Harbour Hartlepool, planning permission had been granted for the project
- At Middlehaven the North Ormesby Interchange had been completed and Terrace Hill had completed the Manhattan Gate development. Middlesbrough College had agreed to construct a new college subject to the agreement of a funding package which was expected shortly
- At North Shore, Tees Valley Regeneration had completed the new gyratory which gave access to the site from the north and chosen preferred developers
- A business plan for the Stockton/Middlesbrough Initiative was being prepared
- Argos opened their 73,000 sq metres distribution centre and the first phase of Morton Palms office development had been completed and occupied with a second phase under construction
- An enhanced Pathways to Work programme was being developed in Middlesbrough

- The Regional Transport Board included the Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor, North Middlesbrough Accessibility Improvements and the Tees Valley Bus Network in the transport programme submitted to Government as part of the Regional Funding Allocation submission
- Tees Valley Regeneration was making good progress on its Tees Valley Metro Study
- The Office of the Rail Regulator had announced it was minded to grant to Grand Central Trains consent for 3 trains a day from Sunderland to London via Hartlepool and Eaglescliffe
- Tees Valley Living had been allocated £36m from 2006/2008 to implement its housing market renewal strategy

In terms of future work programme to September:

- Carry out further research on the development of a renewable energy sector, transport, skills and green infrastructure
- Develop a 10 year investment strategy and development programme by the end of June
- Develop long term governance proposals to take the programme forward
- Produce a second iteration of the City Region Development Programme

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(Councillors Cook and Dunning declared personal non prejudicial interests in the above item.)

The National Strategic Reference Framework

Consideration was given to a report which informed Members of the UK government consultation on the future distribution and management of EU Structural Funds coming to the UK. The consultation raised many important issues, not least allocation of monies between and within regions. The Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit was in the process of producing a local collective view on the questions set out in the consultation document. The JSU response would aim to secure the best deal for the Tees Valley, and enable the Tees Valley Local Authorities and other sub-regional and local bodies to take full advantage of structural funding in the next programme period.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Assisted Area Consultation 2006

Consideration was given to a report which informed Members of the UK government consultation for the review of the Assisted Areas in response to the new European Commission guidelines on regional aid. The Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) was undertaking a local consultation exercise with all five Local Authorities, Tees Valley Regeneration (TVR) and OneNorth East to ensure that current Assisted Area coverage in the Tees Valley was fit for purpose (in terms of investment opportunities), and that appropriate coverage was maintained throughout the Tees Valley.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Proposals submitted to the EU Commission for the Period 2007/2013

Consideration was given to a report which informed Members of the large number of Community policies that would be amended and enforced for the period 2007-2013. These policies included Structural Funds; Rural and Fisheries Reconversion Areas; Competitiveness and Innovation Programme; State Aid Control; Research and Technological Development; Education; Transport Infrastructure; Cultural and Environment.

In parallel, the Member States would more or less tentatively proceed with the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy.

The Tees Valley Joint Strategy (JSU) European Policy team was keeping Tees Valley Local Authorities informed about the amendments to European Community policies, where appropriate leading on Tees Valley responses to national consultations (e.g. Structural Funds and State Aids) and providing support to Local Authorities in sourcing new European funds.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Joint Strategy Unit Proposed Budget 2006/2007

Consideration was given to a report that proposed a budget for the Joint Strategy Unit for 2006/07 based on the previous year's budget and information relating to expenditure to date. The total budget showed an increase of 28% over the previous year due to the incorporation of the Waste Management function, an increase in externally funded project activity and general inflationary pressures.

The 'core funding' contribution from the Tees Valley authorities represented a 1.59% increase on the previous year. This comprised an increase of 2.88% to cover 'inflation', coupled with a decrease of 1.25% 'Gershon reduction'.

Following a thorough review of the Unit's functions and structure, a number of posts were in the process of being filled. It was anticipated that all new staff would be in post by autumn 2006.

Discussions were taking place regarding the possible transfer of the Joint Passenger Transport Group from Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council to the JSU. The budget presented in the report did not include any provision for the JPTG. It would be essential that any such transfer of staff/functions was accompanied by full budgetary provision.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The proposed budget for 2006/2007 be approved.
2. The Director of the JSU be authorised to carry out virement as outlined in paragraph 7 of the report.

List of Meetings

Members were presented with a list of all the meetings that Officers of the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit had attended over recent months.

