

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PROSPERITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT
GROUP HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON WEDNESDAY, 27 JUNE
2007**

MEMBERS

* Cllr R F Croad – Chairman

* Cllr I Longrigg – Vice-Chairman

* Cllr J I G Blackler

∅ Cllr G Date

* Cllr F J Hawke

* Cllr R M Lawrence

* Cllr J T Pennington

* Cllr M Stone

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance and participating:
Cllr R J Tucker

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Strategic Director (Community) and
Economic Development Officer

PPDG.01/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Prosperity Policy Development Group held on 15 March 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PPDG.02/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, these were recorded as follows:-

Cllr I Longrigg declared a personal interest in item 5 (Corporate Priority 2: Achievements and Challenges) by virtue of his respective employment link with the tourism industry and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

PPDG.03/07 **CORPORATE PRIORITY 2: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

A report was considered which provided Members of the newly constituted Prosperity Policy Development Group with a background and overview of the adopted Prosperity Strategy 2006 / 2011. In presenting an economic overview, officers hoped to generate a better common understanding of achievements and future challenges.

Members received a presentation which, in its first instance explained the remit of the Prosperity Policy Development Group highlighting its importance in the delivery of Corporate Priority 2 (CP2): creating the conditions for the growth and maintenance of quality economic activity. The Prosperity and Tourism Strategies were highlighted as two of the main contributors towards the delivery of CP2 along with the Asset Management Plan and Employment Estates Review. In referring to the report, the Council's Economic Development Officer also highlighted one of the concerning features of the South Hams economy which related to the low average work-based earnings compared to the high average house price.

A number of projects which had been achieved were highlighted, including redundant building grants, technology transfer / defence diversification, the greening of employment estates and disabled entrepreneurs project. These had been achieved through partnership working and, in some cases, with the help of European Objective 2 monies.

Challenges for the future included Langage Energy Park and Sherford new community, Dairy Crest, Redundant Building Grants, procurement (support for local businesses to e-market) and issues surrounding finding employment estates for businesses such as the knackerman.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- a) the importance of advancing potential employment estates. A Member queried what safeguards were in place to retain land earmarked for employment against it being developed for housing. Furthermore, was there a legal position on using Compulsory Purchase Orders to obtain employment land. In response, it was noted that the Council used the LDF to protect land for employment and that the Council had already adopted a CPO policy, although these powers were expected to be used as a last resort ;
- b) asset management and the disposal of sites. Following a query, Members were informed that there were clear criteria for the disposal of Council owned employment sites and any release of capital was generally used for the development of further employment sites. The importance of exploiting the Council's other assets to secure a range of corporate priorities was also highlighted;

- c) the importance of inviting Peninsula Enterprise to a future meeting of the Group;
- d) the district's knackerman in relation to keeping a clean environment. Since the implementation of the Dog Act, which made it illegal to bury dead animals on private land, the knackerman was responsible for the disposal of fallen stock. An application for a licensed premises to deal with the safe disposal of fallen stock had faced opposition from local residents and was subsequently refused. However, progress had been made and it was hoped that premises could be found;
- e) destination marketing and the importance of the tourism industry in the South Hams. Members were informed that there was a clear challenge to develop new ways of working which increased involvement of the private sector in destination marketing.

A Member of the Group was concerned over the perceived low wages in the tourism sector, whilst in contrast a further Member felt that wages were competitive as they needed to be in order to recruit local employees.

Concern was expressed with regard to the Tourist Information Centres which felt that the 2007 tourism guides, which were developed in collaboration with Teignbridge District Council, excluded small businesses.

RESOLVED

That the Prosperity Policy Development Group acknowledge the recent achievements in delivering the Council's 'good jobs' priority and note the likely challenges for the immediate future.

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.15 pm).

Chairman