

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PROSPERITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
GROUP HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON  
THURSDAY, 29 JUNE 2006**

**MEMBERS**

\* Cllr R F Croad – Chairman  
∅ Cllr H D Bastone – Vice-Chairman

* Cllr R J Carter	* Cllr J O'Connell
* Cllr G Date	* Cllr M C Ramsay
* Cllr I Longrigg	* Cllr D W S Thorning

\* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance and participating:  
Cllrs S M Fairman, D W May and R J Tucker

Officers in attendance:

Item 5 (minute PPDG.3/06 below refers) – Head of Community Regeneration and  
Economic Development Officer

Item 6 (minute PPDG.4/06 below refers) – Head of Business Development and  
Head of Financial Services

**PPDG.1/06 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Prosperity Policy Development Group held on 15 December 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**PPDG.2/06 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 J O'Connell declared a personal interest in item 5: Development of the Prosperity Strategy 2006 / 2011 & Action Plan (minute PPDG.3/06 below refers) by virtue of his involvement in the building industry and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

Cllr G Date also declared an interest in item 5: Development of the Prosperity Strategy 2006 / 2011 & Action Plan (minute PPDG.3/06 below refers) in relation to the Follaton Farm proposals by virtue of the applicant being a client. Cllr G Date remained in the meeting during discussion on this item but took no part in the discussion on this specific aspect relating to Follaton Farm.

PPDG.3/06 **DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROSPERITY STRATEGY 2006/2011 & ACTION PLAN**

The Group considered a report which set out the draft Prosperity Strategy. The document had been prepared and defined in light of the latest available performance data for the district, an improved baseline of intelligence, and an analysis of the joint community consultation exercise carried out during June and July 2005. The Group was invited to consider the strategy's principles and endorse the detailed action plan with a view to adoption by Council on 28 September 2006.

The report identified an Action Plan which was the key element of the strategy in terms of delivery. The plan was developed to include Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) targets (compliant with the Covalent performance management system) to be monitored on a regular basis to enable periodic revisions in light of delivery. Three high level objectives were identified as follows:-

- Key Objective 1: Improve the economic infrastructure;
- Key Objective 2: Secure external funding for economic projects;
- Key Objective 3: Embed the 'good jobs' priority across Council and partners.

In conclusion, the report noted that the Prosperity Strategy reflected a sharper focus on the three objectives, underpinned by actions which were outcome driven and capable of regular monitoring. Furthermore, as part of the consultation process, it was highlighted that the strategy was to be presented to the South Hams Strategic Partnership for its endorsement.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- a) a prosperity workshop which took place on 3 April 2006 to raise the profile of economic issues. Further workshops were to be scheduled to continue to raise the profile and look at issues and possible solutions. Additional initiatives to raise awareness included the introduction of an electronic Business newsletter;
- b) the importance of the relationship between the Council's Corporate Priority (CP) 1: Affordable Housing and CP2: Good Jobs;
- c) concern with key objective 2: secure external funding for economic projects. A Member of the Group was concerned with possible constraints relating to external funding. In response, Members were informed that funding opportunities in the future were most likely to address issues of productivity and competitiveness rather than capital infrastructure.

Furthermore, it was thought that there could be opportunities for capital receipts from disposals of existing employment estates where that was appropriate although such receipts would not necessarily be ring-fenced. A non-Member of the Group noted that an item was due to be considered at the next Executive about the Employment Estates policy that included issues of acquisition and disposal;

- d) Key Objective 1 proposals. In reference to the actions laid out in the Prosperity Strategy under key objective 1, the following was highlighted:-
- i. Progress development at Langage Business Park. Following a query it was noted that significant Section 106 monies were available. The precise nature of the employment development was still emerging as a result of negotiations and the master-planning workshops. It was expected that the gateway to the site would contain accommodation for SMEs and start-up businesses.  
  
In relation to this development, there was concern over the housing needs of workers and the catalyst effect this may cause on the rest of the district. In response, it was noted that the same issues arose in relation to the development and construction of Sherford;
  - ii. Progress of sustainable employment development in phase with the Sherford new community. A Members concern over the possible influx of commuters from Plymouth was noted;
  - iii. It was hoped that part of the Section 106 Agreement for the Newton Road development in Totnes would be the provision of a footpath to provide linkage with Totnes town
- e) Key objective 2 proposals. In reference to actions laid out under key objective 2, as identified in the circulated report, the following was highlighted:-
- i. Opportunities for Redundant Building Grant (RBG) programme. Members were informed that, from a target of 10 RBG projects for the district, two projects had been agreed with consent being sought for a third project;
  - ii. 'Greening the employment areas'. The Group was informed that Totnes had been chosen to pilot this initiative and it was concerned with helping to improve environmental efficiency of businesses on the estate, possibly leading to general aesthetic improvements. A Member queried whether business rates relief was available for those businesses that took on 'green' initiatives. In response, it was noted that the Council was actively seeking to increase take up of business rate relief;

- f) Key objective 3 proposals. In reference to actions laid out under key objective 3, as identified in the circulated report, the importance of incorporating young people into the strategy along with the crucial role of childcare facilities for parents looking to return to work was noted;

In conclusion, Members noted the difficulties experienced in the tourism industry, which had historically been reliant to some extent on parents who required part time employment. In response, it was noted that the benefits system restricted the amount of income gained by a family.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Prosperity Policy Development Group  
**RECOMMENDS** to the Executive:-

1. its general comments on the strategy;
2. the basis of improved economic data, best practice, and the more inclusive approach to consultation that has contributed to its production;
3. the consultative actions undertaken to ensure buy-in and ownership for the delivery of the action and a partnership commitment to the revised strategy.

## **PPDG.4/06 CAR PARKING POLICY REVIEW**

A report was considered which documented the policy for off-street car parking and acted as a reference document to enable the Group to review the policy that was in place. Part of the strategic policy was to provide car parking in relation to the needs of various user groups and ensure, wherever possible, that current and future requirements were met. The report identified the following hierarchy for car parking provision:-

- supporting tourism by providing sufficient off-street parking and facilities;
- supporting businesses by providing sufficient off-street parking for customers;
- supporting local residents by providing sufficient off street parking and shopping and other facilities;
- other users.

In conclusion to the report it was noted that the Street Scene service strived to be fair and equitable to all customers, which could only be achieved with polices in place which were well thought out and feasible. In coming to that conclusion, officers had also considered the consequences of maintaining income levels in hand with operating a safe and efficient environment.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- a) the hierarchy of car parking provisions. A Member of the Group felt that supporting tourism should be a relatively low priority. Although he did then go on to highlight that it was difficult to achieve a definitive hierarchy as needs varied throughout the district;
- b) a non-Member of the Group's concern that as this subject was such a large issue, the item should be opened up for the consideration of all Members of the Council under the auspices of a workshop. In response, it was noted that all Members were welcome to attend this meeting of the Prosperity PDG if they desired and further to this, the minutes of this meeting would be presented to the Executive at its next meeting where further comments could be made if deemed necessary. Members were reminded that the idea behind the circulated report was not for the endorsement of a new policy but a review of the existing policy;
- c) as the Highways Authority, Devon County Council had the authority to make changes to on-street parking provisions and Members were reminded of the potential knock on effect any changes could have on car parks. A Member therefore questioned the feasibility of a joint meeting between the Prosperity PDG and Devon County Council's South Hams section of the Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC). Furthermore, Members were asked to consider a joint strategy for on and off-street car parking;
- d) Members felt it important for harbour authorities to consider car parking facilities in line with the Council;
- e) car parking provision for businesses. A discussion ensued as to how the Council should support business activity and to what extent car parking passes should be available. It was noted that although there was a restriction on the number of passes that any one business may purchase, this did not address the whole issue. A Member suggested using the park and ride system for business use. In response Members were advised that this had been investigated and it would only displace the problem. Furthermore, some businesses required constant use of their cars;

- f) a Member's suggestion for the need to look at car parking provisions for residents. Currently there was no requirement for the Council to provide such facilities but if it was not addressed it would have an impact on an area of new development. Part of this issue was picked up under the auspices of Development Control where it was recommended that for new developments there be approximately 1.5 parking spaces available per property. However, in light of green initiatives this was discouraged in favour of public transport;
- g) car parking at Follaton House. Members felt that as this issue had been discussed at full Council on 16 February 2006 there was nothing further to add;
- h) the use of credit/debit cards as a method of payment for car parks. Members were informed that opportunities were being investigated and that the Head of Business Development had scheduled a meeting with Exeter City Council to discuss how it operated its scheme;
- i) vehicles above 4.5 metres in length. It had always been the case that in operational terms, to accept larger vehicles into car parks had a number of associated issues, which included cost implications. However, on occasion it had been the case where a vehicle slightly over 4.5 metres had taken up two spaces but had purchased two tickets. This was deemed acceptable if access to the car park permitted and the risk to other users was low;
- j) the appeals process. For the purposes of clarity, Members were informed that the appeals process was for those who did not display a ticket/valid pass correctly and was therefore overseen by the car parking attendant. With regard to compassionate reasons, where an individual was to supply supportive evidence, it was noted that a broad approach was taken as it was hard to be descriptive. Each appeal would therefore be taken on its own merits;
- k) Members were content with the proposed allowing of an additional amount of time for users whose tickets had expired.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Prosperity Policy Development Group  
**RECOMMENDS** to the Executive:-

1. its general comments on the policy within the presented report;
2. any comments on future policy that may need developing to support the activity of car and boat parking.

(Meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 1.00pm).

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Chairman