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**Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education – 13<sup>th</sup> September**

**Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

**Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership – Update**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the work of the Economic Development and Regeneration Partnership (EDRP) for the period 2009/10 and outline key activities for 2010/11.

**Background**

2. The Economic Development & Regeneration Partnership (EDRP) is one of six thematic partnerships in the Local Strategic Partnership structure and is tasked to deliver against an agreed agenda, through a series of strategic aims outlined as follows:
  - To optimise the opportunities for local people – including the most vulnerable people and those from deprived areas – to develop and improve skills and obtain jobs;
  - To encourage the development of a dynamic and diverse business base and job opportunities through support to new and existing businesses in the borough;
  - To improve the economic and environmental infrastructure of Dudley Borough and its town centres; and
  - To champion the interests and assets of Dudley Borough, securing additional resources and improving its position regionally, nationally and internationally.
3. These strategic aims, and the objectives and activities to deliver against the aims, are captured within the approved 2010/11 Dudley Borough Economic Strategy which acts as the EDRP's business plan.
4. On a practical level, the EDRP's main activities include:
  - Informing the development of the Dudley Borough Economic Strategy, linked to local, sub-regional, regional and national priorities, and monitoring its implementation.
  - Providing the strategic direction and agreeing the priorities for the economic development and regeneration of Dudley Borough and to have overall decision making responsibility and management/financial accountability for key initiatives to ensure the delivery of the strategic aims of the EDRP.

- Agreeing any future revisions to the Economic Development elements of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and provide appropriate contribution to the future development of Multi Area Agreements.
- Overseeing the delivery of Community Strategy objectives that are not included in the LAA.
- Approving the strategy for the application of European funds for economic regeneration activity in Dudley Borough.
- Continually reviewing the membership and work programme of the EDRP to ensure that it remains fit for purpose to deliver economic regeneration and development services and activities.
- Contributing towards the wider Dudley Community Partnership outcomes such as improved health and well being and improving the borough's environment.
- Overseeing the development of the Economic Development elements of the Next Generation Local Area Agreement (LAA) and monitoring the delivery of the key outcomes, namely:

**Increasing incomes and wealth and reducing poverty**

- NI 116 Proportion of children in poverty
- NI 166 Median earnings of employees in the area (gross)

**Reducing worklessness**

- NI 152 Working age people on out of work benefits
- NI 153 Working age people on out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods

**Improving skill, qualification and knowledge levels, especially among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups**

- NI 163 Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher
- NI 165 Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 or higher

**Improving enterprise and investment**

- The total proportion of business registration per 10,000 (Age 16+)

5. The key activities and decisions undertaken by EDRP during the period 2009/10 were as follows:

- Phil Coyne (Assistant Director for Economic Regeneration and Transportation) took over the role of Chairman of the EDRP in 2009.
- The membership of the Partnership has been reviewed and strengthened with attendance from Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), Dudley Primary Care Trust (PCT), Advantage West Midlands (AWM) and the Chamber of Commerce.

Specifically, the Partnership has: -

- Agreed a flexible work programme for 2010/11 which can be adapted to suit changing economic circumstances and respond quickly to urgent matters requiring consideration by the Group.
- Played an active role in defining the scope and objectives of the 'Jobs and Prosperity' theme of the revised Dudley Community Strategy 2005-2020.
- Reviewed performance of the Next Generation Local Area Agreement (2008/09 to 2010/11) economic-related National Indicators and the Economic Development and Enterprise (EDE) 'stretch targets' within the Local Area Agreement (2007/08 to 2009/10).
- Reviewed progress in relation to the delivery of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and AWM funded projects for Dudley Borough.
- Reviewed the requirements of the statutory Local Economic Assessment stipulated by central Government.
- Reviewed progress to date in relation to the City Region Multi Area Agreement for Employment and Skills and associated governance structures and targets.
- Participated in the Audit Commission's City-Region inspection on the issue of worklessness and reviewed the recommendations.
- Acted as a forum to understand the implications of initiatives and programmes carried out by Jobcentre Plus and to understand the implications of the newly established Skills Funding Agency and the role of the Black Country Employment and Skills Executive Group.
- Considered the implications of the Transforming Social Care agenda and the role of the National Association of Adult Placement Schemes (NAAPs).
- Considered the Statement of Priorities for the newly-established Skills Funding Agency.
- Provided a useful forum to identify where the Council and its partners can maximise opportunities to work individually or collectively in response to the economic downturn.

#### **Key activities for 2010/11**

6. At its meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2010, EDRP Members agreed that the work programme for 2010/11 should focus on the following key areas: -
  - Reviewing performance of key regeneration projects detailed in the approved 2010/11 Dudley Borough Economic Strategy; considered by Select Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 and endorsed by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010.
  - Overseeing the production of the statutory Dudley Borough Local Economic Assessment (LEA) and developing the Strategic Aims for the 2011/12 Economic Strategy in light of the conclusions of the LEA.

- Reviewing the implications of imminent Comprehensive Spending Review (October 2010) and the forthcoming White Paper of Economic Growth (scheduled to be published in summer 2010).
- Informing the work of the Council's proposed business support and inward investment offer.
- Contributing to the development of a potential Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for the Black Country. It is expected that LEPs will be joint local authority-business bodies brought forward by local authorities themselves to promote local economic development – to replace Regional Development Agencies. An outline proposal for the creation of a Black Country LEP is expected to be submitted to Government before the deadline of 6<sup>th</sup> September 2010.
- Assessing the implications, on a project-by project basis, arising from the confirmed abolition of Advantage West Midlands (the Regional Development Agency) and the Government Office for the West Midlands.
- Considering the implications and opportunities of the coalition Government's introduction of the Single Work Programme. The Programme will provide a single, personalised welfare to work programme for all client groups, regardless of the benefit they claim, delivered through contracted out provision. The Government is aiming to have the Work Programme in place nationally by the summer of 2011.
- The Partnership's role in addressing the coalition Government's 'Big Society' initiative
- Overseeing performance of the re-negotiated economic-related National Indicators within the Next Generation Local Area Agreement up to the end of March 2011. At present, there has been no formal announcement on the future of Local Area Agreements post-March 2011. However, for some time EDRP members have expressed concern with the current National Indicator set in that they fail to provide a live picture of performance due to significant time-lags in the release of data extracted from national sources.

### **Finance**

7. Whereas the work of the EDRP considers issues with significant financial consequences, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report

### **Law**

8. The Council may do anything incidental to, or which facilitates the discharge of its function under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **Equality Impact**

9. The strategic aims of the EDRP concur with the 'Jobs and Prosperity' priorities outlined in the Dudley Borough Sustainable Community Strategy (2010-2013). This includes providing employment opportunities for residents of the borough, particularly in deprived areas, and ensuring they possess the necessary range of

skills; developing and diversifying the local business base; and, creating an attractive environment for all people live, work and invest in.

### **Recommendations**

10. To note the work undertaken by the EDRP during the period 2009/10.
11. To note the proposed activities of the EDRP during 2010/11 and, where appropriate, suggest additional areas, via the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, for EDRP Members to consider.



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