

# **Brampton Economic Partnership - Notes**

Thursday 1 May 2011

3pm at Brampton Community Association

1. **Present:** Lawrence Fisher, Geoff Prest, Marilyn Bowman, Mike Fox, Diane Bradbury, Mike Downham, Bob Allan, Harriet Skyes, Alison Cheetham, Hazel Broatch, Anne Sowerby, Darren Crossley,

2. **Apologies** were received from Stella Lewsley (substituted Geoff Prest), Trevor Atkinson, and Zoe Sutton.

## **3. Matters Arising**

**Town Centre Management** – Hazel reported that we had secured £1000 to kick start turning the ideas to date into action (£500 was from City Council and £500 from County Council (via local Member Cllr. Lawrence Fisher) and she thanked both Councils for their support. A range of funding sources had been identified and following a workshop on 25 May with all the stakeholders an Action Plan would be drawn up and brought back to next meeting for agreement.

**Broadband** – Action had been taken in a very timely manner by Ronnie Auld to the information about 100MW broadband capacity at both Warwick Mill and Airport. It was agreed Hazel should speak with Ronnie and invite him to future meeting.

**Brampton Business Association and growing membership** – it was intended to take advantage of offer of access to businesses at Warwick Mill by doing an energy event (in collaboration with Sustainable Brampton) with the businesses and at the same time discussing the benefits of membership. This event was at early planning stages and BEP would be kept informed as it progressed.

**Rural Energy Event** – a poster had been circulated in advance. This event will target the farming community which make up 44% of business sector in our area and who face significant challenges with the imminent withdrawal of Single Farm Payments. The event will not only give them free one-to-one advice on renewable technologies but also access to organisations who can advice them about FITs/ RHI and other financial support. It will take place on 4 June at Low Luckens.

## **4. Localism/Big Society**

Hazel introduced Darren Crossley, Strategic Director, Carlisle City Council. She also explained the background which has started with our discussions with Maggie Mooney and then a representative group meeting with Darren and Jane Meek, Acting Assistant Director Economic Development. This was to be the substantive item for this meeting as it was so important to the Brampton Area. BEP had long held that if it could protect vital services by

doing things differently that it was willing and able to “help itself”. BEP also recognised that times were changing for local authorities and the message from the Big Society was that communities would need “to step up to the mark” and do what they could for themselves.

Darren went on to explain the City Council’s thinking and the purpose of the session which was to agree the current picture, identify potential for future joint working and to agree next steps. He gave a detailed overview of the current position for Carlisle City Council including outlining the significant challenges they face.

He then talked specifically about the political, economic/environmental, socio cultural and technological situation both now and into future. He outlined significant policy shifts within Central Government –particularly highlighting Localism Bill, Public sector financing, Economic policy, Health, benefits and welfare changes. He could see a new agenda and landscape for regeneration and growth emerging as we faced up to still uncertain economic times with a fragile recovery. SMEs were struggling and although Brampton was in a relatively good position the Partnership was aware from Brampton Business Association of pressures for small businesses.

The need for the public sector to respond to environmental and sustainability projects was identified as public interest increased and the private sector increasingly focused on these challenges.

Darren identified new technologies as a potential benefit for the area but highlighted the challenge to ensure broadband access in the rural areas was “up to the job” and those areas would not be further disadvantaged in access to services.

He also outlined a range of socio/cultural issues – population growth, migration issues (young out elderly in), health – city and rural issues, education levels – again different city and rural issues, university fees, and volunteering/civic activity. Again he highlighted our area’s strengths in terms of volunteering/civic activity.

He talked about how the Council needed to respond to these significant challenges whilst facing reduced capacity. He talked about the need to be very smart, re-engineer, re-skill and above all in the context of this meeting work with communities more smartly too.

The meeting then considered the current picture in Brampton. Darren said the City Council wanted to “stand in our shoes”. Darren had had copies of the research we had done and seen our Action Plan. The meeting identified a range of issues from business growth through improved car parking/street cleaning etc; concerns about impact on tourism sector as a consequence of reductions in support from CTP/CTB; dependence on agriculture sector and the implications of withdrawal of Single Farm Payments on viability and food security; LDF and its implications for long-term and how the Area develops through “managed growth”; public property and engagement with local community in review of assets particularly with emerging community asset registers and right to buy; current high level and future growth in elderly population and implications for services/ and business growth opportunities; emerging potential for social enterprise and volunteering significantly

led by Brampton and Beyond Community Trust; affordable property; and looking longer-term the implications for a rural area of rising energy and fuel prices and fuel security.

It was agreed that the next steps would be for Hazel and Harriet to meet with Darren and detail, using the existing Action Plan as a starting point, the potential for joint working short, medium and long term and to report back to July meeting.

In the immediate term the City Council, County Council and Parish Council advised the meeting that they would progress the thinking around improving car parking.

Hazel thanked Darren for attending the meeting and welcomed the opportunity to work with the City Council for the benefit of the Brampton Area. She stressed that, as this dialogue moved forward that she would echo Darren's words, and the Partnership would need to also "stand in the City Council's shoes" and be prepared to work with the community to "help itself".

**5. Date of next meeting – 9 June 2011, 3-5 pm**