



Leeds, York & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Business Forum in Scarborough Tuesday 10 November 2009

This was the first meeting of the Chamber Business Forum in Scarborough and was chaired by Suzanne Burnett, MD of Castle Employment Agency based in the town and who is also a director of the Leeds, York & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

At the start of the meeting Mrs Burnett welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the reasons behind the meeting taking place ie to:

- Provide an opportunity to raise awareness of and voice opinions on the issues that matter to businesses.
- Provide an opportunity to lobbying and representation activities of the Chamber.

Mrs Burnett then introduced David Kelly, Economic Development Manager with Scarborough Borough Council. Mr Kelly gave a presentation about Scarborough having the title of Europe's "Capital of Enterprise" and what it has meant to the town and what's happening next. He went on to mention that Scarborough needs to raise its profile and one way of doing this was to enter, and win, competitions which will put the town "on the map" particularly as a centre for enterprise activity. He mentioned recent initiatives such as the development of the Scarborough Business Park and the Woodend Creative Workspace as well as mentioning potential developments such as:

- The Spa and Urban Realm Innovation project.
- An Eco Innovation Centre.
- A new state of the art performing arts studio to be built at the University of Hull campus.

However, Mr Kelly did mention that there are underlying issues in the local economy, such as a lack of start up businesses and the need to grow new business sectors such as cultural and knowledge-based firms. In addition, it was acknowledged that better links need to be established with the University of Hull and Scarborough Hospital as both could act as catalysts for future business growth.

Mrs Burnett then opened up the meeting for comments, etc about what Mr Kelly had mentioned. Many were positive about what is happening in the town but concerns were expressed about:

- Broadband connectivity and what are the plans for a roll out service.
- Procurement and the feeling amongst many, particularly in the construction sector, that they are losing out on work associated with local projects

Mr Kelly mentioned that the take up of super fast broadband had been slow amongst the local business community and would need to investigate the reasons why. Regarding the comments about procurements, Mr Kelly mentioned that the bundling together of contracts (which is common practice amongst many Councils) can raise total contract values to such levels that they become attractive to much larger businesses, often from outside the local

area, and become prohibitive to local businesses. **Action - it was agreed that the Chamber and the Council would meet to discuss both these matters in more detail, and that the Chamber would bring together a group of local developers/construction firms to better understand the issues.**

The group then went on to discuss the current consultation about the town's Local Development Framework (LDF) which will help to determine the location and types of development across the borough over the next 15 to 20 years. The borough plan to accommodate over 10,000 new homes over the period up to 2026, together with a range of other types of development, from commercial through to leisure and recreation based. Concern was expressed about the level of proposed residential development and in particular whether the local economy could sustain and support such an increase in population. **Action – it was agreed that a response from the local business community to the LDF consultation is important and that the Chamber would take the lead for this to happen.**

Mrs Burnett closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. She summarised the actions agreed and mentioned that the Chamber would provide regular updates on progress, etc. The next meeting of the forum will take place in March 2010, following on from the Chamber lunch.