

Manchester Independent Economic Review 2008 Workshop Series Evaluation

In preparation for the outputs of the MIER, an integrated series of interactive workshops have been held with economic development professionals in the city region, on themes related to economic development and the MIER's projects. An overview of the five workshops and an evaluation of the series of five workshops (based largely from feedback forms received from attendees) is contained below.

MIER Economic Development Workshop Series 2008 – Feedback					25 September
QUALITY RATINGS	LOW				HIGH
	1	2	3	4	5
Trainer / facilitators presentation of subject				+	
Trainer / facilitators knowledge of subject					+
Session length and pace				+	
Seminar handouts / materials / overhead slides (where appropriate)				+	
Practical exercises / case studies / debate (where appropriate)					+
Scope of session content				+	
Overall session rating				+	
USEFUL			IMPROVEMENT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Areas that received specific praise were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The facilitators' knowledge of the subject matter; - the interactive nature of seminars; and - the more robust, theoretical and in-depth approach that was provided in later workshops (particularly workshops 3 and 4) - Attendees especially welcomed the series as it provided a forum to debate and discuss issues with people from a range of different organisations and professional backgrounds. - In particular, praise was given to the discussions of GVA in Workshop 2; innovation, the environment and 'visioning for MCR' in Workshop 3; and the evaluation/appraisal discussion - including signposting to key documentation in Workshop 4. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was noted by various delegates that certain aspects of the seminars could have been given greater prominence, particularly the parts that encouraged group discussion and looked at case studies. - Some delegates also expressed their desire to have further discussions, in the workshop forum, about specific issues that are currently prominent in local economic development, for example the Congestion Charge. - It was noted that the workshop handouts could have been more relevant to practical, and current, examples. - There was also an appetite amongst some delegates for a more rigorous discussion of some of the issues that were discussed, including market failure (Workshop 2) and economic theory (Workshop 4) - although time constraints prevented this. 		

Workshop 1: Economic Development – Setting the Scene

Thursday 25 September, Manchester Business School

This session set the scene for the series, covering the changing nature of economic development over the last 10 years and the key components of economic growth. It provided an overview of the drivers of economic growth and the current economic development context, including Sub-National Reviews and other regional policy programmes, MIER and key research data sets. Group discussions covered choosing growth over equity and the nature of market failures.

Workshop 2: Sustaining Economic Development – Developing the Thinking and Understanding the Tensions

Tuesday 7 October, Manchester Museum

This workshop provided a more in-depth look at growth and the equity issues in the context of regional economic development, including rationales for state intervention and current economic thinking on economic growth and the importance of skills and environmental considerations. There was a practical discussion of global warming as a market failure, the Stern report (and MCR's 'mini-Stern') and policy implications.

Workshop 3: The Future of economic Development? The Emphasis for Economic Development in the Manchester City Region

Thursday 23 October, Manchester Museum

This workshop provided an introduction to market and technology foresight, and thinking on the role of these in influencing economies. It provided an overview of the latest thinking and the policy choices available to help innovation and the knowledge economy flourish, as well as the opportunities that sustainable economic development can bring. Group discussions focused on creating 'imagined futures' and practical attempts to 'road-map' future policy paths and outcomes, with associated risks and uncertainties.

Workshop 4: The Economics of Economic Development

Thursday 6 November, University of Manchester Core Technology Facility -CTF

This workshop provided an overview of the challenges posed by the Government's Public Service Agreement (PSA) to practitioners in regional economic development. It provided an overview of the issues to consider when planning to maximise the impact of interventions in the local economy, as well as an understanding of the importance and practice of the measurement and evaluation of interventions' impact.

Workshop 5: Going forward with Economic Development

Thursday 20 November, University of Manchester Core Technology Facility- CTF

This workshop provided an overview for the series and included a discussion on the practical implications arising from the Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration, the Multi-Area Agreement and the MIER. The workshop drew together all the references made to the MIER and the case studies made throughout the workshop series and provide pointers for taking forward the research and findings of the work. Discussion focused on SWOT analysis, in groups, of city-region key sectors.

Conclusions

- The workshop series was generally very well-received by those who attended. Particular praise was given to the facilitator's knowledge of all of the subject matter in each seminar, as well as the interactive nature of the seminars, including the group discussions and case studies, which gave people a chance to discuss and debate the practical applications of the theories presented.
- Feedback generally got better as the series progressed (with workshops 3 and 4 receiving perhaps most praise), as the issues discussed were developed further and re-visited in greater depth. This perhaps suggests an appetite amongst delegates for the more detailed and in-depth discussion/analysis that occurred as the series developed. Later workshops provided a look beyond the 'headline' issues, at the theoretical as well as practical causes and effects of market failure, state intervention and other economic issues.
- Areas where improvements were suggested centred on the more practical (rather than content orientated) matters. Time keeping was relatively consistent theme in this regard - with some noting that more time could have been given to certain issues, particularly group discussion and case studies. Some attendees also suggested that handouts could have been better orientated to focus on practical examples of theory, policy etc.
- There appears to be a very strong appetite for further economic development workshops from those that attended this series. Delegates would particularly welcome workshops that provided an in-depth and challenging examination of current economic development issues, and would welcome discussion on the practical aspects of regional economic development. There is a definite desire to have sessions that bring together people from various parts of the economic development community, encouraging discussion and debate amongst these delegates- something perhaps not provided in other forums.