

## Alliance Employment and Skills Board

### Wednesday 17 January 2007 at Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce

#### Present

Frank Lord (FL), Chair  
 Sarah Bentley (SB), ESP (agenda item 2 only)  
 Richard Gill (RG), East Midlands Business Ltd  
 Wes Lumley (WL), Bolsover District Council  
 Freda Tallantyre (FT), CHEA Partnership  
 Geoff George (GG), Nottinghamshire County Council  
 Christine Wood (CW), TUC  
 Ann Jones (AJ), Government Office for the East Midlands  
 Jean Pardoe (JP), Connexions Nottinghamshire  
 Nigel Jackson (NJ), LSC Nottinghamshire  
 Peter Jessop (PJ), Derbyshire Training Network  
 Celia Morris (CM), Nottinghamshire County Council  
 Andrew Street (AS), Alliance SSP

#### Apologies

Peter Brammall, LSC Derbyshire  
 Jan Stanley, Federation of Small Business  
 Carolyn White, King's Mill Hospital  
 Don Hayes, ENABLE  
 Tom Stockwell and Keith Burn, Jobcentre Plus

#### In Attendance

Stef Stubbs (SS), Alliance SSP  
 Heather Downey (HD), Alliance Skills Board  
 Louise Benson (LB), LSC Nottinghamshire

Topic	Information	Actions	Lead Partners	Timescale
<b>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</b>	<b>Frank Lord</b> FL welcomed all present to the meeting and apologies were noted.			
<b>1. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising</b>	<b>Frank Lord</b> The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record. HD requested all members who had not yet returned their completed declaration of interests form to do so and it was agreed that HD should issue e-mail reminders to support this process.	<b>HD to issue e-mail reminder on outstanding declaration of interest forms</b>		<b>January 07</b>

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<p><b>2. Employment, Skills and Productivity Partnership (ESP) - Presentation</b></p>	<p><b>Sarah Bentley</b></p> <p>In her presentation, attached as a annex to the minutes, SB advised that the ESP, which has been operational since June 2005, is a partnership body that works at strategic level to align regional policy with local/sub-regional delivery. In the East Midlands, the key challenges the ESP is working to address include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising employer demand for skills and the enhancing the quality of employment in the region;</li> <li>• Addressing social exclusion and sub-regional disparity;</li> <li>• Responding to changing demography, especially the ageing population;</li> <li>• Aligning skills supply and demand;</li> <li>• Linking skills to other policy priorities;</li> <li>• Raising employer demand for higher level skills.</li> </ul> <p>To meet these challenges, the ESP is forming a range of task and finish groups that will focus on key priorities for action, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling worklessness and social exclusion;</li> <li>• Developing a strategy for Higher Education across the region;</li> <li>• Establishing effective links between the skills and business support agendas.</li> </ul> <p>SB advised the group that a revised Action Plan for consideration by stakeholders and partners will be published in February 2007, alongside a Progress Report. She also stated that the ESP was seeking a new Chair, from the private sector, and welcomed nominations from the Employment &amp; Skills Board. Concluding her presentation, SB stated that she very much welcomed the invitation to join the Alliance Employment &amp; Skills Board and was keen to explore ways in which the ESP and Alliance Skills Board could work together moving forward.</p> <p>In the ensuing discussion, <b>FT</b> welcomed the inclusion of Higher Education in the ESP priorities, particularly in the light of the Leitch Report's emphasis on higher level skills. <b>FT</b> stressed the importance of including Lifelong Learning networks within the HE framework and also offered to use her national position with the Higher Education Academy based in York as a conduit to raise issues at Ministerial level.</p>			

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	<p><b>JP</b> questioned whether the ESP has any dedicated resources to support its work. <b>SB</b> replied that it does not have an independent budget but has strategic influence over the budgets of the organisations that comprise the ESP partnership. <b>JP</b> queried the added value of the ESP given that there are other channels, such as Local Area Agreements, working to align partnership resources. <b>AS</b> stated that it would be helpful, for the next meeting, to have a paper exploring in more detail the employment and skills funding flows at a regional and sub regional level. <b>SB</b> and <b>HD</b> agreed to progress this. On behalf of the Board, <b>FL</b> thanked <b>SB</b> for her presentation.</p>	<p><b>HD and SB to prepare paper for March 07 meeting</b></p>		<p><b>March 07</b></p>
<p><b>3. Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)</b></p>	<p><b>Nigel Jackson</b> Speaking to Paper 010107, <b>NJ</b> advised that the purpose of the paper is to alert Employment &amp; Skills Board members to changes to the planning mechanisms for PCDL (formerly known as Adult and Community Learning) from 2007/08 and, in particular, to seek members' views on the proposed membership of the 'LSC convened' PCDL partnership for North Nottinghamshire. <b>NJ</b> advised that, unlike the majority of LSC-funded adult learning provision that focuses on skills – and qualifications – for employability, the focus of PCDL is on learning for personal development and community enrichment. From 2007/08 onwards, the LSC is required to develop a partnership based approach to PCDL planning to ensure strategic alignment with other related public funding streams in, for example, health and leisure. <b>NJ</b> advised that the recommendations of the PCDL planning group for North Nottinghamshire will be taken to the Alliance Employment &amp; Skills Board for approval. <b>LB</b> stated that the plans for Derbyshire are currently being developed.</p> <p>The Chair emphasised the importance that PCDL plays in engaging hard-to-reach learners, a view endorsed by <b>CM</b>. <b>CW</b> welcomed the inclusion of the 'voice of the learner' in the PCDL partnerships and offered to speak to <b>LB</b> about mechanisms through which this could be supported. <b>FT</b> stated that the HE sector could usefully be included in the partnerships and alerted the Board to the centrality of adult skills within the Leitch proposals.</p>	<p><b>LB and CW to discuss input from the 'voice of the learner' in PCDL.</b></p> <p><b>NJ to provide verbal update at next</b></p>		<p><b>March 2007</b></p>

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	<p>The recommendations in paper 010107 were approved. A verbal update will be provided to the Skills Board in March.</p>	<p>meeting</p>		
<p><b>4. CHEA Partnership Capital Spend Consultation</b></p>	<p><b>Freda Tallantyre/Andrew Street</b>  Speaking to Paper 030107, <b>FT</b> provided an overview of the background, membership and funding structure of the CHEA Partnership, which is working to enhance learner access to Higher Education across the Alliance sub-region. Activity is focussed on the priority sectors of construction, food and drink, health and social care and logistics.</p> <p>The CHEA Partnership is currently consulting on priorities for capital investment. Alliance SSP funding, of approximately £2.1 million, is currently available until 2010, but the Partnership is planning over a 5 to 10 year horizon and hopes to factor in funding from other sources to support its longer term development plans. Two key criteria will be used in the development of proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity must be genuinely collaborative;</li> <li>• Activity must be demand-led and recognise that capital can be virtual – via, for example, electronic infrastructure – as well as bricks and mortar.</li> </ul> <p><b>AS</b> explained that the consultation exercise is planned to run in February, with the subsequent commissioning, expressions of interest and full bid evaluation process completed by July. Following discussion by the group, and agreement on the importance of ensuring full Employment &amp; Skills Board membership engagement with the process, it was agreed that the commissioning round be deferred until after discussion on a paper at the March Skills Board meeting mapping the CHEA investment against other capital plans including LSC developments, Academies and Building Schools for the Future. HD/SS and NJ, in conjunction with FT, will develop this paper, which will inform a discussion about the Skills Board’s priorities for CHEA capital investment.</p>	<p><b>NJ and HD/SS to prepare paper for Skills Board</b></p>		<p><b>March 2007</b></p>

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<b>Item 5. Planning for European Funding Changes</b>	<p><b>Andrew Street</b>  Speaking to Paper 020107, <b>AS</b> advised that work is currently underway to consult on the draft Operational Programmes for the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the period 2007-2013. The closing date for ESF consultation feedback is 22 January 2007, and AS advised that comments made by the Employment &amp; Skills Board members will be submitted to GO-EM. AS invited comments on the draft priorities. In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to retain a clear focus on employability and skills rather than attempting to address the health agenda (JP)</li> <li>• Links need to be made with Train to Gain (RG)</li> <li>• NEET remains a key challenge, with work to narrow the progression gap between E2E and Apprenticeships a priority (PJ)</li> <li>• Developing leadership and management capacity within SMEs needs to be emphasised, with consideration given to financial support to encourage participation (FT)</li> <li>• Further consideration may need to be given to migrant workers and to ensuring that they are on legal employment contracts (SS/CW). SS agreed to circulate an article on skills and migrant workers for consideration by the Board.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked all present for their input and confirmed that the points raised would be fed back to GO-EM.</p>	<p><b>HD to submit consultation response on behalf of the Board</b></p> <p><b>SS to circulate article</b></p>		<p><b>January 2007</b></p>
<b>Item 6. Framework for Mapping and Employment, Skills and Productivity Plan.</b>	<p><b>Heather Downey</b>  Speaking to Paper 040107, <b>HD</b> advised that two templates were proposed for consideration by the Skills Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A template to map current and planned activities in the sub region supporting the ESP and Local Area Agreements through partners strategic funding commitments;</li> <li>• A template to support the production of a partnership sub-regional delivery plan which harnesses the headline economic targets of partners.</li> </ul> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that template 2 be amended to include a column on activities/services and a separate column detailing the targets</p>			<p><b>January 2007</b></p>

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	<p>that the activity supports. HD requested all present nominate someone from within their organisation to provide her with the information required to populate the templates.</p> <p>Concluding the discussion, <b>AS</b> emphasised the importance of this work and stated that template 2, once completed, could provide the basis of future dialogue with the esp/Sarah Bentley.</p> <p>An update will be provided in March.</p>	<p><b>HD to progress - all members to provide HD with a contact</b></p> <p><b>HD to provide update</b></p>		<p><b>March 07</b></p>
<p><b>Item 7. Any Other Business</b></p>	<p><b>Frank Lord – GKN Sheepbridge</b>  <b>FL</b> circulated a press release from GKN on the proposed closure of its Sheepbridge Stokes plant in Chesterfield. Some 420 personnel will be affected. The Chair advised that he has spoken to Jobcentre Plus and also to Connexions. A Rapid Response team will be put in place to try and ameliorate the impact of the closure which, all agreed, is another significant blow to the diminishing industrial base in Chesterfield. <b>PJ</b> agreed to speak to the Jobcentre Plus representative on the Derbyshire network and <b>CW</b> will contact Amicus to support the transfer of apprentices.</p> <p>All agreed that the Employment &amp; Skills Board is an appropriate forum to discuss large scale redundancies and other developments requiring rapid partner interventions. It was agreed that <b>SS</b> should prepare a proposal for the next meeting outlining the Board's role in more detail.</p> <p><b>Stef Stubbs – Small Business Service Survey</b>  <b>SS</b> advised that the SBS Survey has just been published. Given the length of the full report, it was agreed that <b>SS</b> should circulate an Executive Summary.</p>	<p><b>SS to prepare paper</b></p> <p><b>SS to circulate summary</b></p>		<p><b>March 2007</b></p>

**Next Meeting: 14.30 on Friday 23 March at Innovate, Junction 27.**