



Employment & Skills Board

SERVING THE ALLIANCE AREA OF NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE &
NORTH DERBYSHIRE

Friday 23rd March 2007 - Innovate, Sherwood Business Park

Attendees

Frank Lord (FL), Chair
Andrew Marsh (AM), LSC Derbys
Nigel Jackson (NJ), LSC Notts
Freda Tallantyre (FT) CHEA Partnership
Celia Morris (CM) Notts CC
Richard Gill (RG) EMB Ltd
Ann Jones (AJ), GOEM
Carolyn White (CW), representing Nottinghamshire Health Community
Sonia Coleman (SC), Bolsover DC
Andrew Street (AS), ASSP
Stefanie Stubbs (SS), ASSP
Heather Downey (HD), ASSP

Apologies

Jean Pardoe, Connexions
Christine Wood, representing TUC
Jan Stanley, Federation of Small Businesses
Wes Lumley, Bolsover DC
Keith Burn, Derbyshire Jobcentre Plus
Don Hayes (DH), Enable
Peter Jessop, Derbyshire Training Network
Peter Brammall (PB), LSC Derbys
Sarah Bentley, ESP
Tom Stockwell, Notts Jobcentre Plus

Topic	Information	Actions	Lead Partners	Timescale
1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	Frank Lord FL welcomed all present to the meeting and apologies were noted.			
2. Declarations of Interest	HD requested completed declaration of interests forms from those members who had not yet responded.			
3. Minutes and Matters Arising from 17.1.07	1. ESP FL informed members that the ESP Update paper had been deferred to the next meeting in June due to Sarah Bentley having to give apologies for this meeting.			

	<p>2. PCDL NJ confirmed that the PCDL/LSC partnership would be established by 31 March, that the first meeting would take place by 31 May and the mapping exercise by 31 August. HD suggested that the mapping activity she had already undertaken, particularly in respect of adult provision, would provide a good starting point for the LSC to build upon.</p> <p>3. Migrant Workers SS confirmed the article under Item 5 had been circulated and that further reports from <i>emda</i> and the LSC are available. FT requested further clarification from AM in respect of migrant worker eligibility for LSC funded learning support.</p> <p>4. GKN SS confirmed that the partners are in play with GKN to provide a support programme. An application for Rapid Response is in the process of being made. A meeting with GKN was held earlier in the week and a support offer is being scoped. The SSP has offered to consider gap funding for required activities which cannot be covered through mainstream funding routes. Redundancies are being phased over 6 months April-September 07.</p> <p>5. Representation CW asked that it be noted that she was representing Nottinghamshire Health Community as a matter of record.</p>	<p>SS to circulate</p> <p>AM to advise</p>		
<p>4. The Leitch Review and implications for the Employment and Skills Board</p>	<p>Nigel Jackson NJ confirmed that the paper circulated alongside the presentation was a summary produced by the LSC. Key points were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if all current targets are fully met, this was still insufficient to keep up with competitors from other countries. If all targets are hit by 2020, this will still only bring the percentage of higher skills up to what the US and Canada, for example, have today, and the far east, e.g. China, were accelerating at a much faster pace and would far exceed our targets. • It is thought that young people will be allowed to work part time but must be undertaking some form of training. FT commented that implementation of the report would be phased in, i.e. firstly to 			

	<p>17 years old and then to 18 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2 for adults needs to be on a voluntary rather than a compulsory basis. • Unclear who would pay for this learning e.g. private sector, state, tax payers or individuals. <p>With respect to funding, detail is awaited as to whether funds will be handed over to employers and individuals and where the responsibility for monitoring funds would lie. The key recommendations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase adult skills • To increase Level 3 and 4 qualifications in the workplace through Train to Gain. <p>CM asked whether the report indicated that supporting workforce development would be voluntary or compulsory for employers and it was suggested that the voluntary route would be tried up to 2010. NJ warned that Train to Gain was as yet still unproven with issues to be resolved.</p> <p>FL commented tax changes in the Budget could affect employer investment, indicating that it would be the larger companies who would invest. RG stated that investment by smaller companies would only be driven by supply chain pressures.</p> <p>NJ confirmed that there are no plans for structural change, but there are recommendations for a new Commission for Employment Skills nationally. Current predictions are that there will be growth of 5M skilled jobs and loss of 3M unskilled jobs. It is therefore essential that the current workforce continue to upgrade their skills. NJ commented on the need for employer engagement, particularly as there are no large employers in this area. General perceptions need to be revamped to ensure people are constantly thinking about training, retraining and upskilling.</p> <p>AS asked if anything could be learned from the Far East, to which NJ replied that these economies were very dynamic e.g. high number of graduates, booming economy with high levels of state investment. CM commented that UK culture amongst young people was not 'aspirational' in comparison. AM commented that the UK was good at 'inventing' and there was a need to harness what we are good at.</p>			
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<p>5. Discussion on emerging employment and skills partnership structures</p>	<p>Andrew Street AS updated members that the establishment of the Alliance Employment & Skills Board fits with the emda/ ESP model working on an SSP boundary basis. He noted that Derby City also have a Jobs & Skills Group, based on the City LSP.</p> <p>Derbyshire County Council now wish to establish an Employment and Skills Board to support the LAA Block 4 work across the county. Following a recent meeting involving AS, SS, HD with Donald Rae, Derbys CC, a further meeting was convened by Derbys CC. The outcome of this meeting was a proposal to establish an overarching Employment and Skills group covering the whole of Derbyshire including the City and the Alliance area. This group would act as a bridge, cover cross border issues but would not replace the existing Employment and Skills Boards. Key members would be the LSC, Jobcentre Plus, SSP's, Local Authorities and representation from the Derby City Group. Employer involvement is desirable, however the precise nature of this is to be decided at a later date. It was noted that the skills message needs to reach employers across the whole of Derbyshire.</p> <p>FT asked if the Employment and Skills Boards to date are based on any national guidance, to which AS responded that work to date is pre-emptive.</p> <p>It was concluded that the Derbyshire overarching group is a sensible way forward and necessary to provide cohesion.</p>			
<p>6. Update on business support and Train to Gain</p>	<p>Richard Gill, East Midlands Business Ltd EMB is a new business set up to provide business support in the East Midlands, and is already providing the Train to Gain service for the LSC and will provide the core Business Link and EMITC (UKTI) from 1st April 2007. The business consolidates 5 Business Links down to 1 organisation, the rationale being to increase direct business support, to make the service available to more existing and potential customers and to improve consistency across the region. The organisation provides IDB support in the region, clearly separating brokerage from delivery. A network of local access points with local area teams will be located across the region, with the regional centre located in Derby.</p>	<p>HD to circulate presentation by email</p>		

	<p>RG explained the focus of EMB - i.e. to understand the needs of a small business and to broker the appropriate support, and encourage the business to think differently about how it could achieve further success, possibly through further support. A shared knowledge bank will be owned by emda and serviced and maintained by EMB.</p> <p>RG explained there would be generalist and skills brokers, who are currently gaining accreditation and who would be responsible for helping employers gain the best value for money with a range of Government subsidised business support, including training, and choice of best value providers. It was confirmed that the process was not restricted to skills support at Level 2.</p> <p>SS urged partners to communicate any new commissioned skills activities to EMB so their skills brokers can be aware of the full breadth of provision in the sub-region. This could be imported and accessible from the knowledge bank being provided by <i>emda</i>. SS also urged EMB to feedback any intelligence gathered by the skills brokers which may inform the Board's priorities. RG agreed to progress on a six monthly basis.</p> <p>FL asked if there was a commitment to respond within a certain time frame to businesses to which RG responded that all businesses will be responded to promptly. Concern was raised in respect of small numbers of trainees as opposed to large groups whereby the trainees would have to wait for providers to achieve a 'critical mass'. RG responded that this would not be tolerated and the training would be brokered to different providers in that situation.</p>	<p>RG to provide 6 monthly updates to the Board.</p>		
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<p>7. Mapping employment and skills activity in the Alliance area</p>	<p>Heather Downey HD thanked all partners who had provided quality information for the mapping exercise to date but stated that the exercise was still underway as a number of partners were still to provide information or had missed the cut off point prior to the meeting. HD explained that the location of activities within the mapping may need revision as some could fall into more than one priority.</p> <p>HD commented that there was currently not much detail on mainstream activity funded by LSC or Jobcentre Plus, possibly because this had not been explicitly requested, and whether Board members would find this helpful. AM responded that it may be possible to provide generic spend by sector but was unsure when this might be available. NJ queried how useful the exercise would be and suggested a “breather” with a return to this question at a later date once further consideration had been given as to how useful this might prove to be.</p> <p>FT stated that the exercise was extremely useful for CHEA in identifying where issues were being addressed and where gaps are which need attention, but also that it would be a challenge to keep the information current. RG commented that the information would also be useful for EMB in its role supporting small businesses and working with those supporting start up businesses.</p> <p>HD asked if the Board agreed for the information to be returned to those who had provided it for verification and for permission for the information to go into the public domain. HD also proposed developing the information into a database to be updated on a six-monthly basis to help partners with planning and commissioning. Information providers are again to be asked if they are happy to proceed on this basis. The Board agreed to the request.</p> <p>HD also asked Board members if they were happy to proceed with the suggested key activities being developed into a Delivery plan for 2007/08. It was agreed to proceed on this basis and a draft to be circulated for comment. FL thanked HD on behalf of the Board for the work she had done on the mapping exercise to date.</p>	<p>HD to contact partners for verification of mapping information, permission to use publicly in a database</p>		
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<p>8. Higher level skills capital investment and strategy</p>	<p>Stefanie Stubbs SS highlighted the findings from the consultation exercise and asked for Board comments on the suggested principles for a commissioning round.</p> <p>Discussion ensued on the scope of the capital funding and the scale of projects to be supported. Funding ICT infrastructure as opposed to buildings was discussed and it was agreed that it this technology could be funded as it provided a mechanism for providing higher level education and training through a common approach. AS commented that broadband infrastructure upgrades would open up further opportunities.</p> <p>FL asked SS if the discussion had been helpful in providing more of a steer and SS confirmed that it had been useful. FT confirmed to FL that the recommendations were reasonable.</p>	<p>SS to develop commissioning prospectus</p>		
<p>9. Any other business</p>	<p>There was no other business. The meeting closed at 5.00 p.m.</p>			

Next Meeting: 21 June 2007, 3.30 – 5.30pm. Venue TBC.