



# Employment & Skills Board

SERVING THE ALLIANCE AREA OF NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE &  
NORTH DERBYSHIRE

## Thursday 21 June 2007 – The Turbine, Worksop

### Attendees

Frank Lord (FL), Chair  
Andrew Marsh (AM), LSC Derbyshire, representing Peter Brammall  
Nigel Jackson (NJ), LSC Notts  
Freda Tallantyre (FT) CHEA Partnership  
Celia Morris (CM) Notts County Council  
Richard Gill (RG) EMB Ltd  
Ann Jones (AJ), GOEM  
Sue Hepworth (SH), representing Nottinghamshire Health Community  
Sonia Coleman (SC), Bolsover DC, representing Wes Lumley  
Christine Wood (CW), representing TUC  
Jan Stanley (JS), Federation of Small Businesses  
Don Hayes (DH), Enable  
Peter Jessop, Derbyshire Training Network  
Andrew Street (AS), Alliance SSP  
Stefanie Stubbs (SS), Alliance SSP  
Heather Downey (HD), Consultant - Alliance Employment & Skills Board  
Louise Benson, LSC Nottinghamshire (minutes)

### Apologies

Peter Brammall – LSC Derbys  
Kay Adkins – KAM Ltd  
Sarah Bentley - ESP  
Tom Stockwell – Jobcentre Plus Notts  
Jean Pardoe, Connexions  
Wes Lumley, Bolsover DC

Topic	Information	Actions	Lead Partners	Timescale
<b>1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</b>	<b>Frank Lord</b> FL welcomed all present to the meeting. HD advised that Kay Adkins, an <i>emda</i> Business Champion and Managing Director of KAM Ltd, has joined the Board as an employer representative and will be attending the next meeting in September. HD advised that Tom Stockwell will be replacing Keith Burn as the Jobcentre Plus representative on the Board.			

<p><b>2. Minutes and Matters Arising from the previous meeting</b></p>	<p>The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record.</p> <p><b>1. ESP</b> HD advised that the ESP plan has now been published.</p> <p><b>2. Migrant Workers</b> AM advised that the LSC/DfES policy in respect of migrant workers is contained in the recently published LSC Learner Eligibility Guidance 2007/08. This can be downloaded from the LSC's website.</p> <p><b>3. Train to Gain</b> It was agreed that it would be helpful to have an update on Train to Gain performance at the September meeting. NJ clarified that <i>emda</i> funding for Business Start Ups is currently contracted to a number of agencies including Nottinghamshire Business Venture but that this funding will be transferred to East Midlands Business Ltd (EMB). NJ advised that the Skills Pledge was formally launched on 14 June. The Pledge requires employers to publicly commit to supporting all of their employees to achieve a level 2 qualification. EMB brokers will be promoting the Pledge as part of their employer engagement work across the region.</p> <p><b>4. Higher Level Skills Capital Investment</b> SS confirmed that the commissioning prospectus has been published. An update on successful bids will be provided at the next meeting.</p>	<p><b>HD to circulate copies of the Plan</b></p> <p><b>RG to provide update on Train to Gain in September</b></p> <p><b>SS to provide update in September</b></p>		
<p><b>4. Tackling Worklessness and Social Exclusion in the East Midlands</b></p>	<p><b>Martin Yarnit, MYA Associates (MY)</b> <b>MY</b> explained that MYA is working with <i>emda</i>/the ESP to develop a framework to increase economic activity and reduce the number of benefit claimants across the region. The draft framework, currently at consultation stage, aims to move 17,000 people off benefits and into sustainable economic activity each year, a total of 86,000 individuals between 2008 and 2013. The views of Employment and Skills Board members are sought as part of the consultative process.</p> <p><b>MY</b> emphasised that the targets are ambitious and achieving them will require better planning, co-ordination and resource alignment between</p>			

	<p>partner agencies. The proposal, which draws on domestic and international good practice, is based on a brokerage model which will bring together, at local community level, a network of personal advisors working with benefit claimants and a team of employer link advisors to broker suitable matches on an individual basis. On-going support to both the individual and the employer is an integral part of the model to ensure that employment is sustainable.</p> <p>In terms of employer engagement, the proposals contains the following draft recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing public sector compacts through which public sector organisations commit to recruiting a certain number of the target cohort over a given period. High profile public sector leadership is seen as central to the success of the model.</li> <li>• Developing a retail sector compact to support benefit claimants to access jobs arising from flagship retail developments.</li> <li>• Using public procurement as a lever to require contractors to provide entry level employment opportunities for priority groups.</li> <li>• Encouraging all major employers to take part in a job interview guarantee scheme, with a commitment to recruiting a certain number of the target cohort over a given period.</li> <li>• Encouraging public sector agencies to streamline their approaches to employers.</li> </ul> <p><b>FL</b> invited comments from Employment and Skills Board members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FT</b> emphasised the importance of support post-recruitment and encouraging new entrants to employment to develop their skills in the workplace. <b>MY</b> advised that Train to Gain would be used to encouraging up-skilling post employment.</li> <li>• <b>DH</b> stated that the Learning Champions model could usefully be included in the framework. <b>MY</b> replied that it is anticipated that the personal advisors will fulfil a similar, if slightly broader, role.</li> <li>• <b>AJ</b> welcomed the recognition that successful interventions need to be local in approach and that one size does not fit all. She pointed out the need to help SME's with recruitment and training. Historically in Nottingham the Government Taskforce Into Work model proved very successful in the early 1990's. <b>MY</b> endorsed</li> </ul>			
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	<p>this view, but reminded Board members that such models are expensive, typically costing £2k to £2.5k to generate a successful job outcome. Although this is much more cost effective longer term than benefit costs, it does exceed the current Jobcentre Plus per capita projections and partner agencies must therefore be aware of the resource implications of the model proposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AS</b> emphasised the need for clear leadership of the project. <b>MY</b> stated that in his view the ESP was well placed strategically to fulfil the lead role but currently lacks the resource capacity.</li> <li>• <b>AS</b> questioned the prominence of the public sector in the proposed employer engagement strategy given that job growth in this sector is not anticipated. <b>MY</b> replied that the public sector is important in the context of leading by example but acknowledged that further work on SME engagement is required.</li> <li>• <b>NJ</b> stated that the proposals in the framework reflect good practice in the Alliance area and mirror national thinking around, for example, the Skills for Jobs programme. There is already significant inter-agency collaboration across the public sector sub-regionally, which constitutes a good basis for further partnership development. <b>NJ</b> re-iterated the importance of engaging small employers and also emphasised that the impact of migrant workers. Although the proposals recognise the importance of using procurement as a lever for major contracted projects, <b>NJ</b> recommended that this approach be extended to ancillary contracts across the public sector.</li> <li>• <b>CM</b> emphasised the importance of raising this issue up the political agenda and ensuring that the proposals are embedded at planning stage within the public sector.</li> <li>• <b>AM</b> and <b>PJ</b> expressed some concerns that the proposals may adversely impact on the NEET cohort and result in displacement of apprenticeship opportunities.</li> <li>• On behalf of Kay Adkins, <b>HD</b> emphasised that volunteering has an important role to play as an intermediate step towards full economic engagement. <b>DH</b> endorsed this view.</li> <li>• <b>FL</b> pointed out the need to link this work with the development of the new academies.</li> </ul> <p><b>FL</b> thanked <b>MY</b> for his informative presentation.</p>	<p><b>HD to provide a verbal update in September</b></p>		
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<p><b>5. Making the Connection in the Alliance Sub-Region</b></p>	<p><b>Stefanie Stubbs</b>  <b>SS</b> advised that the previously circulated paper provides an overview of the progress of the Making the Connection Programme since its establishment almost three years ago. Reflecting the approach advocated regionally in the previous paper, Making the Connection essentially operates as a brokerage model providing a holistic support package to employers in terms of recruitment and staff development and, in turn, encouraging local residents from across the sub-region to gain employment in growth industries. Making the Connection is funded jointly by the Alliance SSP and the Alliance for Enterprise (LEGI), with governance currently provided by a Strategy Group chaired by Jobcentre Plus Derbyshire. The core team comprises a Manager seconded from Sherwood Energy Village and a Support Officer seconded from Jobcentre Plus, with three employment outreach workers in the process of being appointed.</p> <p>Successes to date include the Construction Gateway project with Kings Mill Hospital and the Family Employment Initiative. Making the Connection will be launched to partners at Kelham Hall on 17 July, highlighting progress to date and plans for the future. All Board members are welcome to attend.</p> <p><b>SS</b> invited the Board to consider the series of recommendations at the end of the paper, including developing a more formal reporting line between Making the Connection and the Employment and Skills Board. <b>AS</b> emphasised the importance of this to ensure that the profile of the programme is raised and its on-going development is supported by the collective oversight of the Board. <b>NJ</b> welcomed the progress made to date by the initiative and supported this position. The recommendations were endorsed and it was agreed that Making the Connection should be a standing agenda item for the Board moving forward. It was also agreed that further consideration should be given to involving a representative from EMB in the Strategy Group and <b>JS</b> suggested that some direct employer involvement would be helpful to inform the development of the programme at operational level. In terms of rollout of the FEI, <b>AS</b> reported that the ASSP is committed to this and will be talking to other partners to gain their support.</p>	<p><b>HD to include MtC as a standing agenda item</b></p>		
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<p><b>5. European Social Fund (ESF) Draft Operational Framework 2007 - 2013</b></p>	<p><b>Nigel Jackson and Heather Downey</b>  NJ advised that the previously circulated paper provides an update in respect of the next ESF co-financing round. Consultation is currently taking place on the broad themes that will be incorporated into the prospectus for 2007 -2013. The simplicity of the planned approach is welcome, with only two strategic priorities proposed. Priority 1, Extending Employment Opportunities, is essentially about tackling economic inactivity, including NEET, while Priority 2, Developing a Skilled and Adaptable Workforce, will address a number of themes relating to workforce development. Consultation events at PERA on 25 June and Colwick Hall on 26 June will enable stakeholders and prospective deliverers to provide feedback on the proposals prior to the final prospectus being issued by January 2008.</p> <p>In the ensuing discussion, <b>FT</b> expressed disappointment that a 5% cap has been set on activities to support level 4 achievement given current attainment levels in the Alliance sub-region. <b>CW</b> stated her concern that there is already slippage in the timescales for the current tendering round resulting in a potentially serious funding gap for organisations whose funding from the last round is close to completion. It was agreed that this concern should be included in the feedback.</p> <p><b>AS</b> emphasised the importance of aligning ESF with the Employment and Skills Board’s strategic agenda, a view endorsed by <b>JS</b> who stated that the Board should play a proactive role in commissioning bids. It was therefore agreed that this point should be flagged both through the consultation response and by the ASSP communicating this to emda.</p>	<p><b>HD to include in consultation feedback</b></p> <p><b>AS to contact emda</b></p>		
<p><b>6. Establishing an Executive Group</b></p>	<p><b>Heather Downey</b>  <b>HD</b> stated that, as the Board enters its second year, it is timely to consider the establishment of an executive group to underpin the Board’s work. The group will have two main purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To develop agenda items and supporting papers</li> <li>2. To progress work commissioned by the Board.</li> </ol> <p>It is recommended that the Executive Group meets between Board meetings. The paper proposes a core membership – LSC, SSP, Jobcentre Plus and Local Authority - based largely on organisational capacity, but other member organisations will be invited to participate as appropriate. One of the functions of the group will be to develop closer</p>			

	<p>relationships with parallel structures working on the 14-19 agenda.</p> <p><b>FL</b> stated that the case for an executive group was clear but, rather than creating a new body, suggested that the group replace the existing Alliance SSP Enterprise and Skills Issues Group. This proposal was agreed. Draft terms of reference for the Executive Group will be brought back to the Employment and Skills Board for ratification in September.</p>	<b>HD to include draft ToR on agenda for September</b>		
<b>7. 2007/08 Work Plan / Mapping Framework</b>	<p><b>Heather Downey</b>  <b>HD</b> thanked all partners who had provided quality information for the mapping exercise. The information is now being developed into a database, and it is planned will be linked via the website. Partners will be requested to update the data on a regular basis to ensure that it remains current.</p> <p><b>HD</b> provided a brief update on funding for the Skills Board and advised that the Alliance SSP is currently financing the Board direct pending confirmation of LSC Local Initiative Funding for 2007/08. <b>NJ</b> advised that agreement in principle has already been reached and that a contract will be issued to the Alliance SSP shortly.</p> <p><b>FL</b> requested members to feed in comments on the proposed delivery plan to <b>HD</b> direct. It was agreed that the template should be amended to include a column highlighting which partner has lead responsibility for each activity itemised.</p>	<b>ALL – comments to HD on delivery plan. Template to be amended to include responsibility column</b>		
<b>8. Any Other Business</b>	<p><b>Ann Jones</b>  <b>AJ</b> advised that she will be retiring from GO-EM in September and that her replacement on the Board will be Alan Mitcheson. On behalf of the Board, <b>FL</b> thanked Ann for her contribution and wished her well in the future.</p> <p><b>Heather Downey</b>  Further to previous discussions on large scale redundancies, <b>HD</b> advised that in Nottinghamshire a core response team, led by Jobcentre Plus, had been established. <b>AM</b> stated that Derbyshire did not operate a standing group but that task groups were convened on a case by case basis.</p>			

	<b>Freda Tallantyre</b> FT reminded the Board that the official launch of the CHEA takes place at the Turbine on 25 June. All Board members are welcome to attend.			
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**Next Meeting: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2007, 3.30 – 5.30pm. Venue TBC.**