

Employment, Learning & Skills SSP

Minutes of Executive Group Meeting 13th September 2010

9.30 am, Marketing Suite, HBC Municipal Building, Widnes

Present:

Wesley Rourke (in the chair)
Nick Mannion
Jo Lomax
Siobhan Saunders
Hitesh Patel
Gerry Fitzpatrick
Cllr Sue Edge
Simon Clough
Madeleine Hamadianian
Cleo Pollard
Colin Billingsley
Hayley Dooley
Debbie Dalby
Claire Tierney

Organisation:

Economic Regeneration (HBC)
Strategic Policy & Partnership (HBC)
Riverside College Halton
Adult Learning & Skills (HBC)
Halton CAB
Enterprise & Employment (HBC)
Halton Borough Council
14-19 Partnership (HBC)
Adult Learning & Skills (HBC)
Halton Parents & Carers
Jobcentre Plus
Jobcentre Plus
HVA
External Funding (HBC)

1. Welcome/Apologies

- 1.1 Wesley Rourke welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Group provided introductions.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from:
- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Claire Bradbury | YMCA |
| Sue Baxendale | Halton Housing Trust |
| Diane Sproson | Connexions |
| Alan Graham | Communications & Marketing (HBC) |

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no personal or pecuniary declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last meeting and Matters arising

- 3.1 New structure – previously circulated.
- 3.3 Tesco pre-recruitment project - press release has been issued.
- 3.4 4-19 Partnership Strategy Group's Terms of Reference - previously circulated.
- 3.5 NEEO's and 'Links to Work' – status of this project unclear. No SLA produced for 2010/11. Queried where the project is still running, and what funding it receives. **NM to Investigate and clarify current situation.**
- 3.6 BIZ Directory – covered in GF's Enterprise Partnership update.

4. Feedback from Development Session 12 July 2010

- 4.1 Summary paper circulated with the agenda. Consensus was that the session was in general felt to have been useful. Thanks were expressed to NM for leading on the day in WRs absence.
- 4.2 The findings will now be used to help with the shaping, direction and focus of the partnership as it moves into the 'post-WNF' era of less external funding, emerging Local Economic Partnership's ('LEPs') and the twin policy drivers of 'localism' and the 'Big Society'.

5. WNF – Project Evaluation

5.1 The partnership's Performance Group analysis and ranking of the self-assessment questionnaires circulated with the agenda was outlined by NM. The information submitted indicates that WNF currently contributes some or all of the employment costs of about 49 posts in the 19 projects in the partnership's programme. Of these, 27 are 100% funded and 22 rely on WNF to meet a proportion of costs.

5.2 Comments from members:

- WR; Projects have been ranked in terms of what how they could contribute towards future priorities. However, no indication of what, if any, resources will be available after March 2011. Also, that rather than view projects in isolation may be better to bring the best elements together and develop a strategic commissioning framework.
- DD; Need to be careful about what structures we set up so not weighted in favour of the public sector in light of Govt's commitment to the 'Big Society'. ethos
- HP; Felt the exercise had been transparent and useful to help with exit planning.
- SS; Reminded that HEP is much more than HBC, as there are several partners contributing to the success of this project. Also, SS has attended a recent prime contractor's LGA round table discussion, and was clear that 'one-stop shop' arrangements hosted/co-ordinated by the local authority is L.A. seen as an effective arrangement.
- CB; What Halton has is more progressive than he sees elsewhere in region. A challenge will be building links and partnerships which whichever consortia win the local prime contractor contracts. Also, that strong exit strategies for projects need to be in place for the end of March. Added that advisable to look at activities which are complemented by key activities of DWP in 9 months time.
- JL; Queried redundancy payments from WNF. **NM to check on this and circulate advice received to group as soon as possible.**
- WR thanked members for contribution. To take two key points to the SSP Chair's meeting later in the week. First, the need to reflect government's priorities. Secondly, key learning points can contribute to design and development of our work beyond 2011 to address current and emerging local priorities in new sustainable community strategy.

6. 2011 – 2026 Halton Sustainable Community Strategy

6.1 A report and the current draft Sustainable Community Strategy ('SCS') had been circulated with the Agenda. NM reminded the Group that there is a statutory duty for a SCS, and the current one 'expires' March 2011. New SCS will dovetail with the new Local Transport Plan ('LTP3') and Halton Local Development Framework Core Strategy. Key section regard to ELS are 6.7 – 6.11. **Members asked to discuss the SCS within their own organisation and feedback to NM by end September. Also any major 'cross-cutting' issues that should be incorporated in it.**

6.2 SS advised that outcome of the various skills consultations in progress should be included. The Skills sustainable growth and further education consultation ends on 14 October

6.2 Next steps are for the draft SCS to be subject to formal public consultation. This exercise will be launched at the 'My Halton' event on 28th October 2010.

6.3 A five year (2011-2016) delivery programme needs to be developed for each of the themes in the SCS. WR suggested that this will form the basis of our SSPs work programme for the coming years and should be drafted in the light of the policy options paper previously circulated to members.

NM requested to pull together a small drafting group to develop a draft delivery programme for consideration at next Executive Group meeting.

7. Sub Group Updates

7.1 Skills

SS informed that the last two Skills Group meetings had provided the opportunity for managers of

projects that sit with the group's area of interest to make a brief presentation and discuss their activities to the group. More details of recent activity are in report circulated with the agenda.

7.2 Enterprise

A written progress report had been circulated by GF prior to the meeting. GF stressed that the start-up grant of £500 for new businesses has been found most useful. However, there is only resources to offer intensive support for new start-ups for up to 12 months. GF outlined the potential for Local enterprise partnerships ('LEPs') to seek funding from the Regional Growth **NM to circulate a brief FAQ sheet on the development of LEPs for members.**

DD believed that there will be a growth in freelance workers and consultants from April 2011, and suggested that Halton 'register' of freelancers could be collated under the which could be badged under the partnership. She also felt it would be useful for the partnership to consider how sub-contractors could be made known to contractors.

7.3 Employment

A progress report had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was felt that the ELS partnership should be a sounding board to those organisations wishing to procure goods and services. This would provide an opportunity for the Group to offer opinions and influence spend. CB felt that there should be regular meetings of the sub-group Chairs.

8. Government welfare reform proposals

CB briefed the group about the pending major reforms of the welfare system that were initiated by the previous Government, and are likely to be taken much further and faster by the new one. There is likely to be the most significant changes to how the welfare system is administered and what it provides for a generation, with a drive to reduce the number of people on out of work benefits and the length of time they are in receipt, over then next few years. The will be a strengthened link between eligibility for benefits with willingness to seek work.

9. Total Place

9.1 Information report on Total Place circulated with the agenda as at last HSP meeting agreed that each SSP would be briefed on concept of Total Place and be encouraged to look at areas of activity where the concept could be applied locally.

9.2 Total Place looks to extract added value and improved outcomes by deliverers of public services working together more closely at the local level. 13 Total Place pilots mapped total local expenditure on a theme, and then made in-depth assessments of the activities and expenditure by agencies it. This identified barriers to improving outcomes for service users/residents. Action to remove these barriers now being implemented by each of the pilots.

9.3 The development of a 'Focused Partnership Delivery' pilot in Halton outlined by CB. This tackles longstanding JSA claims and identifies a claimant' barriers to work and how to remove them. . **CB to provide update on the Focus Partnership Delivery pilot at the next meeting.**

10. Any other business

DD informed that on 1st October HVA is to merge with St Helens CVS to form Halton & St Helens VCA. Sally Yeoman has been appointed Chief Executive of new organisation. Commitment to Keep bases in both Halton and St Helens.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Dates of next two Exec group meeting have changed to align better with HBC's ELS PPB. New dates Monday 6th December @ 14.00, and Monday 7th February 2011 @ 09.30.