

Employment, Learning & Skills SSP

Draft Minutes of Executive Group Meeting 14 May 2009

9.00 am, Jobcentre Plus Widnes

Present:

Mark Wilson
Garry Collins
Marie Hoyles
Gerry Fitzpatrick
Kevin Mothersdale
Neil Maguire
Jane Trevor
Mark Grady
Margaret Harper
Claire Tierney
Claire Bradbury
Andy Guile
Diane Sproson
Cllr Eddie Jones
Hitesh Patel
Cleo Pollard
Adele O'Neill

Organisation:

Jobcentre Plus
HBC Economic Regeneration
Halton Employment Partnership (HBC)
Enterprise & Employment (HBC)
LSC
LSC
Jobcentre Plus
HBC Policy & Partnership
Riverside College
External Funding (HBC)
YMCA
HVA
Connexions
Councillor (HBC)
CAB
Halton Parents & Carers
Community Devt Parental Involvement
(Children's Centres)

1. Welcome/Apologies

- 1.1 Mark Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Group provided introductions. A new member to the Group is Cleo Pollard of Halton Parents & Carers.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from:
Lisa Driscoll Policy & Partnership (HBC)
Eleanor Carter External Funding (HBC)

2. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising

- 2.1 The previous Minutes were reviewed and agreed.
- 2.2 Matters arising were:
NEET Action Plan – see Item 5.

3. End of Year Performance Review/New PMF arrangements

- 3.1 Much of the data contained in the Review is now out of date and affected by recession. GC felt that possibly more local indicators need to be developed as national indicators cannot be changed.
- 3.2 The final quarterly reports did not contain all end of year cumulative figures. Lisa is working on producing a final year end statement and **GC will email this report to the Group.**

- 3.3 The LSP has signed up to new Performance Management Framework. ELS SSP will now regularly be holding face to face sessions with project managers with the first on 27th May and a second on 9th June. Projects will be advised in advance of when their own session is. MW agreed to consider whether projects doing well should be rewarded from any identified under spends.
- 3.4 MW informed that due to changes within JCP Colin Billingsley now has a new role for Halton JCP but in the interests of independence and transparency has retained all external relations work in Halton.
- 3.5 GC informed the group that the recession fighting fund needs an SLA for signing off on 22 May but this is very difficult as we do not yet know what it is to be spent on.
- 3.6 MW stressed that WNF funding must be spent effectively for local people. Over 2 years there is an additional £3m to be spent.

4. Sub-group reports

4.1 Enterprise

- The progress report was reviewed. GF reported that there are an increasing number of initial business enquiries from those recently made redundant.
- CP explained that for many people the initial risks are very off putting. If there could be some form of insurance system so if a business failed there was a guarantee of income this would be an encouragement. MW said the partnership will look into this.
- MW informed that Colin Billingsley has made contact with JCP Wales who have worked on this issue to enable a person to remain on benefits whilst working on Enterprise. MW felt that work trials reduce risk and Halton should be doing more. GF explained the sustainability grant.
- GC informed the group that DWP is providing the NWDA with an additional £3m to fund (at a regional level) people who are 6 months unemployed to start a business. It is believed that that in the next 2-3 months the landscape of the whole area will change completely.

4.2 Employment

- MW reported a staggering rise in unemployment within the Cheshire Halton & Warrington area and outlined JCP focus in getting people back to work and the new initiatives available. **MG to email documents round Future Jobs Fund.**
- The number of people signposted by JCP to CAB for voluntary work has increased to such an extent that the bar setting to join the team is rising.
- RAST: MH informed that there is now to be a main RAST Group (for the whole JCP district) with 4 smaller groups (one for each local authority).
- MW felt that Halton needs to develop its provision of the guided learning hours supported by LSC.
- Through the Council Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board (PPB) a review is to be undertaken looking at debt counselling/financial inclusion. This takes account of the new community strategy target around financial inclusion.

4.3 Skills

- A copy of the Skills update had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- SS/NM met with Amion for commissioning a research & business plan for entry level jobs for local people, around the construction integrator model. It

was suggested that it would be a good idea to look at the work done in the North East and Wirral.

5. NEET

- 5.1 DS has previously circulated the NEET Action Plan to the group. This is being revised and there is a report that could be circulated. **DS to circulate.**
- 5.2 There is a lack of clarity as to progress on the NEET employer engagement post that has been funded from the monies secured from the commissioning pot (£35k this year) and made available to CYP SSP. DS said that Connexions has not been commissioned.
- 5.3 **MW/GC will look to clarify the position with CYP SSP and will report back to the Group.**

6. 3MG Update and Inward Investment

- 6.1 The announcement re Customer No. 1 is to be formalised very shortly. MW informed that anyone can visit JCP requesting their details be noted for warehousing work. This information should be shared with any community contacts.

7. Migration Fund

- 7.1 This fund has been established by central government, also money provided by other EU countries has been significant. The Fund has been put together where local authorities feel there is a need to bid in to it for support in a community where there are significant numbers of people involved. **Cheshire Fire Service is considering a new bid and GC will find out if Halton are included. MG to provide information on the Fund for circulation to the Group.**

8. Future Jobs Fund

- 8.1 MW reviewed the document on FJF and reported that today is the first day for local authorities to bid into this. The role of JCP is to support Halton in making a bid to the fund or to join with another LA or to join with Merseyside. The emphasis will be on local authorities and there is a clear desire by City employment strategy (CES) Board to have a CES Strategy Submission. GF is organising sessions with LSP partners to take forward.

9. Risk Register

- 9.1 This item is up to date. Documents had been circulated prior to the meeting.

10. Sustainable Community Strategy Review & Other LSP Matters

- 10.1 This item is up to date. Documents had been circulated prior to the meeting.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 MW informed on the commissioning project for supported workshops through Urban Renewal SSP. GC advised that with supported employment the problem is that the commissioning round was setup for £5m WNF with Urban renewal and Employment & Skills putting in bids. However, LSP suspended the commissioning process advising it was only appropriate to take projects from 3 areas which effectively cut out any other projects.
- 11.2 VOLA are working on the new advancement service being rolled out and are keen to have a number of sessions with partners. GC has had an invitation circulated and requested partners to forward to anyone who may find this of interest.

- 11.3 KM informed of a media briefing by LSC tomorrow based around Merseyside, but impacting on Halton. This is based on the Framework for Action from NWDA.
- 11.4 NM informed that sub-regional events have been held but the message needs to be got over to local news sheets. Tim Leather has been invited to attend.
- 11.5 The Halton Employment Partnership will be starting a new logistics course on Monday; however more people need to be recruited for the courses.
- 11.6 **The draft Skills Passport was handed round and the Group were requested to provide feedback to MH.**

12. Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

- 12.1 The next meeting will be held on Thursday 16th July in the Conference Room, Runcorn Jobcentre Plus, at 9.30 am.