

WEST NORFOLK PARTNERSHIP

SKILLS AND LEARNING GROUP MEETING

Notes of a Meeting of the Skills and Learning Group
held on Monday 7th April 2008
in the Board Room, Principals Suite, College of West Anglia

PRESENT: David Pomfret (Chair), Gill Daniels, Mike George, Andy Hodgson, Sue Jorgensen-Moore, Paul Kunes, David Lennard-Jones, Martin Slater,

APOLOGIES: Rory Robertshaw

<p>1. MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2008 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>2. MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>There were none.</p>	
<p>3. UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS</p> <p><u>(i) West Walton</u></p> <p>Gill Daniels had circulated, by email, a copy of the interim progress report from West Walton School. She explained that some interesting points were noted in the report and the project was a good example of one that was working well.</p> <p><u>(ii) INSPIRE project</u></p> <p>Gill Daniels had received an update report from Jenny Rouse who was co-ordinating the project. The project was delivering workshops to develop IT, numeracy and literacy skills in the Downham Market area. Elements of the workshops had also been loaded onto laptops so that bite-sized taster sessions could be delivered around the community to promote the project further.</p> <p><u>(iii) Create a Story Project</u></p> <p>Gill Daniels informed the group that even though funding for this project from the group had now ended many of the schools involved had decided to continue delivering elements of the projects to their pupils.</p>	

<p><u>(iv) Refrigeration Project</u></p> <p>Gill Daniels explained to the group that this project, which had been awarded funding by the group to investigate the need for educational training courses to be set up relating to refrigeration and engineering, was now progressing and she agreed to keep the group updated on progress.</p> <p><u>(v) Year 8 Girls Project</u></p> <p>Sue Jorgensen-Moore updated the group on progress with this project. After delays in finding a project co-ordinator it was hoped that the position would be filled shortly as a suitable candidate had been identified. Once the project co-ordinator was appointed the project would be able to start immediately as all other elements of the project were in place. The pupils and mentors to be involved in the projects had been identified within the schools.</p> <p><u>(vi) Apprenticeship Project</u></p> <p>Mike George informed the group that the appointed consultant had started work on this project and had reasonable success obtaining information from relevant companies. He explained that an interim report would be available soon and he would circulate copies to the group for information.</p>	<p>GD</p> <p>MG</p>
<p>4. LEARNING SHOP</p> <p>Gill Daniels informed the group that the outcome of the ESF bid had been received and unfortunately no funding was available for the development of a learning shop in King's Lynn.</p> <p>She explained that she would now investigate the possibility of a funding contribution from IIC and was advised to liaise with Vince Muspratt.</p> <p>Members of the Board felt that although this was a worthwhile project, if funding was applied for from IIC questions may be asked about how sustainable the project would be and how would it run once funding had finished.</p> <p>Gill Daniels agreed to liaise with the relevant officers and keep the group updated on progress.</p>	<p>GD</p>
<p>5. ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE GROUP AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GROUPS</p> <p>David Pomfret had asked for this item to be on the agenda for discussion so that the core purpose and objectives of the group could be explored to ensure that its focus was to respond to one of the priority challenges for the partnership which was raising skills levels.</p>	

He circulated a document which detailed proposals on how to ensure that the group was focussing on the priorities of the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Norfolk Local Area Agreement.

He explained that the Sustainable Communities Strategy stated that raising skills, aspirations and attainment was one of the biggest challenges facing west Norfolk and that there was a real need to improve the local skills base to help drive up the low wage economy. He explained that Norfolk was below the East of England average with regards to the availability of qualified people.

He notified the group that the recently published results from the Quality of Life survey indicated that there was a skills gap in West Norfolk. David Pomfret had met with Ian Burbidge and Martin Slater regarding the results of this survey relating to training and skills and they agreed to conduct further analysis of the results to provide further information on perceptions towards training.

A copy of the West Norfolk Partnership 'map' was circulated to the group and detailed where the Skills and Learning group fitted in with the other Thematic Partnerships. The group were in agreement that they linked most closely to the Economic Development and Enterprise Partnership and the Children and Young people Partnership and they needed to ensure they worked closely with these groups to ensure that there was no duplication of work.

David Pomfret reminded the group that they needed to be clear about its purpose and he proposed that they should take direction from the aims and objectives under the 'Aspiring and Skilled' theme objectives. Key performance indicators could then be developed from these objectives.

He proposed that the Aspiring and Skilled aims and objectives could be split up as follows:

1. **Raise aspirations and educational performance** – this could be split with the 14-19 dimension under the responsibility of the Area Learning Board and the 19+ age range under the responsibility of the Learning and Skills group.
2. Reduce exclusions from schools – should be the responsibility of the Children and Young People partnership.
3. Reduce the number of young people who were NEET (not in employment, education or training) – should be the responsibility of the Area Learning Board.
4. Increase participation in lifelong learning – needed further consideration as this was no longer a government priority.
5. **Support housing and economic growth with major investment in education, training and skills development – should be supported by this group.**
6. **Create a well educated, well qualified, skilled workforce – should be supported by this group.**

MS/IB/
DP

Therefore the Chair proposed that this group should support the objectives highlighted in bold above. This would enable the group to focus on developing the working age population of West Norfolk with emphasis on raising aspirations and creating a skilled workforce. He then informed the group that once the role of the group had been shaped the group could review the membership of the group.

Mike George commented that he agreed with the direction that had been proposed by the Chair as he felt a narrowed focus would benefit the effectiveness of the group but felt that it was important to ensure the group remained independent. He felt that the focus of the group needed to become more strategic than operational and this could be achieved by wider representation on the group.

Andy Hodgson commented that she hoped the narrowed focus of the group would contribute towards developing low level skills development for adults.

Paul Kunes was in agreement with the proposals as he felt the group had been concentrating on schools rather than skills and employment. He felt that the proposals would improve his ability to contribute to the board as he was an employer representative. He reminded the group that when it was initially set up investigatory work was carried out with regards to what skills were required by employers that could not be met and he felt that this should be reinvestigated by the group.

Sue Jorgensen-Moore raised concerns that schools still needed support with the development of vocational learning and that the drive towards employer engagement needed further consideration. It was imperative that the ALB and Skills and Learning Group did not operate in independent silos.

David Lennard Jones expressed concerns as he felt work needed to be carried out to ensure all elements of the aims and objectives were covered.

Gill Daniels explained that she agreed with the proposals of the Chair but was concerned that work was being carried out by the group with the schools projects and which group would continue this work if it no longer fell under the remit of this group. She also agreed that there was a gap in the amount of skilled adult workers in the area and that Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) would be a contributing factor to help meet the gap.

In conclusion the majority of the group agreed with the proposal which was to focus on development of the working age population of West Norfolk with a major emphasis on raising aspirations and creating a skilled workforce. This meant that future work carried out from the group would consist of:

- A focus on marketing and communications
- A commissioning and research approach to understanding and meeting the needs of employers (focussing on key current and planned employment sector skills needs, working closely with the Economic Partnership).
- A focus on participation and attainment in the government priority areas:
 - youth apprenticeships
 - Adult skills for life

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train 2 Gain (workplace level 2, 3 and skills for life) - First full level 2 and 3 qualifications - Increasing the fee contribution from employers and adults. <p>AGREED: (i) That the Skills and Learning Group priority focus is on developing the working age population of West Norfolk with a major emphasis on raising aspirations and creating a skilled workforce.</p> <p>(ii) That Mike George, Martin Slater, John Norton and David Pomfret liaise to draft revised terms of reference for the group and circulate to group members for comments.</p>	MG/MS/ JN/DP
<p>6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p><u>Resignation of Group Member</u></p> <p>David Pomfret informed the group that from David Dixon from the Lynn News had resigned from the group. He explained that his reason for resigning was that he often had to cover work in Peterborough, Wisbech and Spalding therefore he was often unavailable for meetings.</p> <p>David Dixon had passed on his best wishes to the group with the many initiatives planned.</p> <p>David Pomfret, on behalf of the group passed on best wishes to David Dixon. He explained that once the revised terms of reference for the group had been drafted and agreed the group would review membership to ensure a wide representation of organisations.</p>	
<p>7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting of the West Norfolk Partnership Skills and Learning Group will take place on 19th May 2008 at 2.00pm in the Board Room at the College of West Anglia.</p>	

The meeting closed at 3.37pm