

## Employment, Learning & Skills SSP

### Minutes of Executive Group Meeting 24 September 2009

9.30 am, The Heath, Runcorn

**Present:**

Gary Collins  
Neil Maguire  
Siobhan Saunders  
Lisa Driscoll  
Maurice Gleeson  
Jane Trevor  
Colin Billingsley  
Gerry Fitzpatrick  
Claire Tierney  
Claire Bradbury  
Diane Sproson  
Cleo Pollard  
Colin Billingsley  
Joanna Jones  
Simon Clough  
Madeleine Hamadarian

**Organisation:**

HBC Economic Regeneration  
Learning and Skills Council (LSC)  
Adult Learning & Skills (HBC)  
Policy & Partnership (HBC)  
Riverside College Halton  
Jobcentre Plus  
Jobcentre Plus  
Enterprise & Employment (HBC)  
External Funding (HBC)  
YMCA  
Connexions  
Halton Parents & Carers  
Jobcentre Plus  
CAB  
14-19 Partnership (HBC)  
Adult Learning & Skills (HBC)

**1. Welcome/Apologies**

1.1 Gary Collins welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Group provided introductions.

1.2 Apologies had been received from:

Mark Wilson Jobcentre Plus (JCP)  
Eleanor Carter External Funding (HBC)  
Andy Guile HVA  
Hitesh Patel CAB

**2. Additional Agenda Item – Briefing by Riverside College**

2.1 Maurice Gleeson, the newly appointed Assistant Principal, Skills & Enterprise for Riverside provided a handout “Riverside College – Where we are Now” and outlined each slide in detail.

2.2 A question and answer session followed:

- MG confirmed that for A Level entrance a GCSE ‘B’ is the minimum entrance requirement and although there must always be a bar there will be flexibility around admissions criteria.
- SC is working on Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) with Connexions to ensure people understand the options and routeways that are available.
- There was discussion as to whether schools understood that flexibility existed and GC formally requested that the College ensures schools are aware of all options so they can encourage and ‘put the message out’.

- Additional activity is planned with extra money the college has received due to the recession. GC said all provision issues and ideas should be fed through to the appropriate partnership working groups to avoid duplication and gain maximum impact.
- MG provided a brief overview of the Senior Management Team.
- From a JCP perspective all their advisors need to be kept up to date as to what the College can offer.
- The College is seeking additional premises near existing buildings and NM queried whether there are there buildings that can be used (which must be fit for purpose) and whether WNF underspend could be spent on capital. GC suggested that as the Moor Lane Business Centre may be a possible opportunity.
- It was felt that transport between the various sites is a bar to students and MG confirmed that the College is reviewing this. For NEET programmes this must be factored in.
- MG stated that the college was very interested in the use of **Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)**. GC noted that the Primary Care Trust had put in a bid for IAPT last year but it was not successful. MW had said JCP would help out with any new bid and GC asked JT to find out the latest.

2.3 MG to present a College update at the January ELS SSP meeting.

### 3. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising

3.1 The previous Minutes were reviewed and agreed.

3.2 Matters arising were:

Item 7 – Migration Fund: The planning day is on 22 October when it is hoped to define and agree the outcomes of the projects. Any comments or queries to be sent to Shelah Semoff.

11.2 No information received yet on future policy implications for lone parents but **CB will update at a future meeting**

CB has spoken to policy colleagues re insurance policies and is to refer to MW and clarify with CP. GC has tasked a business coach to look at this and a proposal is aimed for the next meeting.

GF attended the meeting with Lancashire County Council financial champions. The funding is around how to improve “let’s make money” understanding/financial literacy. There is the potential to look at how Halton Credit Union might develop and at the enterprise potential to make loans to business start-ups in addition to the HBC loan.

### 4. Performance Issues

4.1 Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) SS noted that there had been a small under spend in Q1. She has reported back to MW where monies are to be allocated. Although 3MG is not yet on stream, Marie Hoyles has been tasked to look into costings for other areas where the funding could be allocated. For information the current HEP Award is 4 weeks, comprising 2 weeks generic and 2 weeks sector specific with an added 2 weeks for sector specific qualifications. A sheet detailing costings for Enhanced HEP Award Training was circulated together with an update on the construction integrator in Halton.

4.2 A discussion took place on expenditure and what could be released.

- GC advised that on further inspection of the digital inclusion project budget and expenditure that took place last year, it has been identified that the project has £228k which is £28k too much. However, there is a need for additional training for residents that was not originally identified. As such it made sense to use £10k of this for the training (making the new project total £210k)

- MW has agreed that this SSP will fund the SSP Network Day at 15k.
  - SS informed that Adult Learning & Skills Devt has received a £1500 grant for the forthcoming National Festival of Learning
  - The following amounts were identified : £51k on unemployment, £17k on NEET and £18k on the digital inclusion project. In addition there would be a separate meeting on the HEP spend in the near future.
  - CB raised the project that MW has put forward to create an incentive pot whereby local businesses would receive cash for taking on people from priority groups/areas. In essence this is a shift on emphasis to more personalised support? The view of the group is that this sounded ok though there would be some practical issues to resolve in relation to other programmes running. It was agreed this project should be considered as part of the wider discussion about new commissioning
  - **GC requested the Group to email him on any areas that are felt to require additional activity or new areas for commissioning within two weeks.** GC will produce a summary of proposals for the ssp to consider and take forward.
  - The LSP Board has committed £160k WNF into a recession fund. The SSP Chairs had reviewed this and referred to Economic Climate Working Group (ECWG). A number of options were being discussed and one was whether there should be more funding into basic skills activity. **SS to look at this and the Group to forward her any ideas** so GC can feed this into the ECWG deliberations.
  - NEET Employers' Project has been delayed in start-up. It was agreed that the allocated money be allocated to a new delivery agent. Anyone interested in hosting it as a post with salary circa 17k for the remainder of this year, 35k for next year. **The Group were requested to forward any expressions of interest to GC on 2 sides of A4.** Due to the need to have this project start soon the group agreed to delegate the final decision on who is commissioned to the Chair of the SSP.
- 4.3 The LSP Partnership has reached a number of its targets and received a reward grant. The Board has agreed to place this in a central pot and SSPs will be asked what are the areas that the LSP should be commissioning.
- 4.4 NM suggested a graduate programme which is currently not available in Halton. **He is to circulate information on graduate schemes with a one-side paper on commissioning.** Steve Wood (Liverpool University) to be invited to present at next meeting.
- 5. ELS Networking Event**
- 5.1 JT reported that at a recent meeting it was proposed that the event be held on 14<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> January, for 30 – 40 people, inviting SSP and Sub-Group members and Project Managers with venue to be booked by JCP. JT would like any ideas for workshop sessions, those already suggested are communication, performance management. Facilitators and volunteers will be required for the day plus more volunteers to contribute to the planning. DS confirmed Connexions willingness to assist. A possible theme of "All Working Together" was suggested. **SS to raise this event at the next Skills Group meeting.**
- 6. CAA**
- 6.1 GC informed the meeting that the assessors were looking at skills progress is considering a red flag for this area.
- 6.2 NM advised the Annual Population Survey (APS) 2008 shows increase in the level of skills and has feed information into the CAA team. He felt the robust partnerships Halton has in place should be acknowledged.

- 6.3 It was suggested that available information could be reviewed at the ELS event. SS referred to the client engagement matrix and this subject will be raised at the next Skills Group meeting. Members were referred to the Learning Halton website and The Grapevine.
- 6.4 The use of radio and mystery shoppers was discussed. It was thought sensible to look at a radio campaign to boost take up of available projects. **CP agreed to look into this.**
- 7. Local Economic Assessment**
- 7.1 A draft guidance briefing paper had been circulated with the Agenda. GC informed that next year's assessments will inform future strategies. A future issue will be Government pushing for Halton to work with other local authorities. **GC requested that colleagues look at this in more detail over the next few weeks and then the group can discuss any issues identified at the next meeting.**
- 8. CES**
- 8.1 The paper circulated with the Agenda was reviewed. Pages 5 & 6 contain the key issues at the city region level that will influence what happens in local authority areas in the future.
- 9. Future Jobs Fund**
- 9.1 GF provided the Group with an update.
- 6,110 jobs are to be created across GM between October 09 and March 2011. The profile for the first tranche is available and of 2572 jobs approved 75 are Halton jobs.
  - Although there is eligibility criteria attached it is a voluntary programme and the jobs have to be in the public, voluntary or community sectors and demonstrate community benefit.
  - A person continuously NEET for 6 months can be eligible.
  - JCP advisors will be based in HPIJ.
  - Most jobs will be available through the Third Sector - CAB, HBC, energy efficiency, recycling, RSL.
  - 26 weeks paid employment is offered with a minimum 25 hours per week or more at minimum wage or above. DWP offer 6.5k for this.
  - JCP are to put in staff for intervention should the job finish.
  - The wraparound service in Halton is TNG
- 9.2 NM informed that LSC is happy for FJF to access TTG. Any member with ideas to please forward them to GF. All jobs will be forwarded to JCP for an eligibility review.
- 10. Construction Integrator Model**
- 10.1 SS circulated an update and drew attention to the main points contained therein in particular 1.3 detailing projected new activity and opportunities arising.
- 10.2 The Business Plan which is not quite complete is being prepared by Amion, along with the Action Plan.
- 10.3 There is a potential 469 jobs. HEP is the intermediary for 3MG.
- 10.4 The next step is for the Business plan to be presented to the Council and SSP and to finalise the employment of a Project Manager. HEP's under spend may be considered for this.
- 11. 3MG and Inward Investment Update**
- 11.1 As 3MG has not yet come on-stream, CB informed that people's expectations on vacancies have to be managed. There are no declared vacancies on the 3MG website

and the formal announcement is still awaited. The building will be formally completed on 19 October prior to the “building cool down”.

## **12. Sub-Group Reports**

### **12.1 Skills**

- SS had emailed the draft set of questions for the 2009 Business Perceptions Survey to the Group and requested that any questions or contributions be sent to her.
- The NLDC Summary of Projects 2009/10 was circulated.
- The Skills Passport is being progressed through the Skills Group. SS will circulate an email to the Group regarding this and the further work to be done.

### **12.2 Employment**

- The Employment Sub-Group met last Friday and the minutes are being prepared. A sub-group report will be forwarded to the Board next week.

### **12.2 Enterprise**

- GF circulated the Enterprise update and provided all members with an “Enterprising Halton” DVD.

## **13. Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting**

**DRAFT**