

West Lancashire Local Strategic Partnership
Employment, Learning & Skills (Working) Group Meeting

15th October 2009 10.00 am

West Lancashire Investment Centre

Attendance:

Councillor Adrian Owens Chairman – West Lancashire Borough Council
(WLBC)
Paula Huber Economic Regeneration Manager - WLBC
Pete Trewin Support Officer - WLBC
Greg Mitten – West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service (WLCVS)
Greg Swift - WLCVS
Ann Boocock – Lancashire Adult Learning
Gina Moran – Skelmersdale & Ormskirk College (SOC)
Philip Russell– Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL)
Maureen Fazal - Exsel

1. Apologies

Ian Kent & Kevin Shore JCP – to be replaced by Emma Smith
Hugh Evans – Chamber
Jayne Traverse WLBC – to be replaced by Paula Huber
Jo Turner LCC – replaced by Philip Russell
Chris Hartley SOC – replaced by Gina Moran
Jeanette Newman TWL – replacement to be decided

2. Minutes (23rd July 2009)

The Minutes were agreed as a true record.

3. Actions from 23rd July 2009 meeting

The following updates on action points were reported:

From 3rd June Meeting

Fleetwood Pilot: PT reported that Moving On had received funding from the mental health team.

Jayne Traverse to provide an update on RDPE (Rural Development Programme for England): PH reported that the LAG (Local Action Group) was officially launched on 23rd Sep 2009. 70 businesses and partner organisations attended the launch. Anyone who wanted to apply for a business grant should contact Karen Kerrigan, the LAG Development Officer. Greg Mitten was appointed as chair of the LAG Executive.

From 23rd July Meeting

Item 4: Pat Perkins of the NHS Skills Academy to report to a future group on how employment/work trial opportunities in the NHS/private care sectors can be maximised for the Borough's residents: PT reported that a meeting had been arranged for 20th Oct, with reps from the Skills Academy, JCP and the LSC attending.

Item 5: PT to investigate the possibility of setting up a redundancy task force for West Lancs and to effect the signing up of WLBC to a Local Employment Partnership (LEP): PT reported that there had not been any significant redundancies in West Lancs. Advice is available on the Council's web-site on how to combat the recession and a mechanism agreed with JCP and the LSC is ready to swing into action if a major redundancy that passes the threshold is reported. On the LEP, he is preparing a report to the Council's Corporate Management Board to take this forward. The group noted the changes to the JCP representation and that there had been no representation at this meeting. **Action** PT to ask JCP to provide representation & continuity.

Item 6: PT to check as to whether the funding attached to the support officer's post could be used to fund a study of the feasibility of setting up a community enterprise hub in Skelmersdale: Report on agenda – Item 4.

Item 6: It was agreed that the Chamber and Business Link be invited to attend the working group: PT reported that the two organisations had been added to the mailing list for the group. .

Item 7: PT to monitor the NWDA's request for project ideas for the ERDF Worklessness funding and to investigate the possibility of a bid to include the development of links to employers: Item 7 on agenda.

Item 8: PT to continue to support the Mid Lancs Future Jobs Fund project: Item 8 on the agenda.

Any Other Business

LCC to report on the extension of apprenticeships and pre-employment training to placements in the voluntary sector: PR will take up this action point.

4. Skelmersdale Vision: Connecting People to Jobs

This project is aimed at maximising the benefits for local people arising from the regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre. It is centred on the support officer post for this group. Unfortunately, because of the recession and the Kirkby public inquiry, the town centre project has been put on hold. However, the recent announcement of funding for the new College means that the chances of encouraging the wider redevelopment should receive a boost. The opportunity has arisen to carry out some pilot activity funded from the project which could guide action plan implementation, tackle key gaps and barriers identified while developing the Skills & Worklessness Strategy, and assist with funding bids (eg Performance Reward Grant) and at the same time meet the project's output targets. The money must be spent before the end of 2009. Two proposals were endorsed by the group:

1. Training in skills for which there is a demand from employers eg fork lift truck training. West Lancs Community Recycling could organise the training and work with partner organisations such as Moving On and Working Wonders.
2. Community Enterprise Hub Feasibility Study, addressing the lack of accommodation in Skelmersdale for training and community enterprise identified by this group, identifying surplus accommodation and community transfer opportunities, as well as informing the development process for the My Place project and ensuring the sustainability of the West Lancs Training & Learning Centre. GM said that an opportunity had arisen very recently for a LCC graduate placement via Connexions who could carry out this work, subject to the time constraints.

The group **endorsed** the two proposals.

5. Performance Reward Grant

This working group had been invited by the West Lancs LSP to propose a business case for its overriding priorities for actions to meet the aims of the LAA and the Sustainable Community Strategy, and to assist the LSP Executive to decide the overall Partnership priorities for the allocation of PRG. It was agreed that the gaps and barriers identified for the Skills & Worklessness Strategy (table attached) should form the basis of the group's priorities.

Action: PT to inform the LSP Executive of the priorities identified.

6. Skills & Worklessness Strategy

PT explained that the draft strategy was almost complete and would be circulated before the end of 2009 for comment. The table of gaps and barriers to tackling worklessness provides a useful summary of the group's priorities which can inform the identification of pilot projects (See 4.) and bidding for PRG (See 5.).

It was agreed that: the table of gaps and barriers be accepted as a basis for identifying pilot projects and bidding for PRG prior to circulation of the draft strategy.

7. ERDF Worklessness Bid – Update

PT reported that a project idea based on employer engagement had been considered favourably by the NWDA in terms of eligibility but there were still problems with finding match funding. Discussions are taking place with Business Link who could potentially run the project and provide match from their existing activity & staff time. WLCVS wished to be included in group discussions.

Action: PT to monitor the discussions between the NWDA and Business Link.

8. Future Jobs Fund – Update

PT reported that LCC are about to issue offer letters for the projects starting in Oct 09. The WLCVS project would start in Jan 2010, with some places also provided by organisations such the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Barnardos. MF said that West Lancs Community Recycling would be providing some places in the Oct 2009 input.

Action: PT to continue to support the Mid Lancs Future Jobs Fund project.

9. Performance indicators: Monitoring and Reporting

PR of LCC said that the latest information required to update achievement against targets was expected but had not been received in time for the meeting. **Action:** PR to make the information available for the next working group meeting.

10. Any Other Business

1. AB said that LCC is inviting new ideas from social enterprises for a competition called 'Give Your Idea the Green Light'. The winner from each district would get £5k and go into the County competition for which the winner would get £20k.
2. PH asked the group to endorse a bid for Second Homes funding for an application for membership of the Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board – on the grounds that this would help to develop growth sectors such as food & drink and hotels & catering in West Lancs. **It was agreed that:** the group endorse the bid.
3. GM asked if Business Link could make a presentation to the group to explain their offer. The group expressed its concern at the lack of senior level involvement from Business Link and perhaps someone could attend at least one meeting to explain. **Action:** PT to ask Business Link to make a presentation to the group.

9. Next Meeting

10.00 am Wednesday 9th December 2009 at the West Lancashire Investment Centre