

West Lancashire Local Strategic Partnership
Employment, Learning & Skills Thematic Group

Minutes of the 21st July 2010 meeting

West Lancashire Investment Centre

Attendance:

Cllr Adrian Owens	Portfolio Holder Regeneration and Estates (Chairman)
Maureen Fazal	Exsel (Int) CIC (West Lancashire Community Recycling)
Pat Perkins	Skills Academy for Health
Danny Barry	Groundwork Trust
Chris Hartley	Skelmersdale and Ormskirk College
Greg Swift	West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service (WLCVS) and Quarry Bank social enterprise
Philip A Russell	Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL)
Paula Huber	West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC)

1. Apologies

Peter Scott, Skills Funding Agency, Dawn Lord, Skills for Health, Ann Boocock, Lancashire County Council, Greg Mitten, WLCVS and Jackie Much, Groundwork Trust.

2. Minutes of last meeting, 31st March 2010

Agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising. In response to a query from Councillor Owens regarding when the final report of the Asset Based Community Development would be ready, GS reported that they were currently waiting for all individuals involved to grant permission to include their information and they were looking for a suitable 'call centre' type facility to assist with this activity.

4. LCC Update on LAA and MAA

PAR updated the group although he had limited information available to him. He confirmed that LCC were awaiting clarification on a 'new' LAA programme, but feedback was that there would be no funding and partners should be working together anyway.

The Mid Lancashire MAA sign off is still being pursued and Lancashire Leaders would be meeting in August to proceed as planned. Staff from within the Fylde MAA Economic Development Company (EDC) have now received 90 day redundancy notices due to the need to make

savings and efficiencies, making the early decision by the Mid Lancashire MAA not to have an EDC the correct one.

Working Age Client Data would be out after summer and the data should be very good, as it will take into account the Future Jobs Fund programme.

5. WL LSP Performance Reward Grant (PRG)

Councillor Owens explained to the group the current situation regarding the performance reward grant and that although West Lancashire had been told the amount it would be receiving, this had actually been reduced by 50% to assist with efficiencies and savings. As a result, project leads were being asked to revisit their proposals and look at merging priorities where possible.

As a result of this activity, PH explained how the 'young people into employment' theme had been progressed. The revised project was being developed by involving a range of partners, including Skelmerdsale and Ormskirk College, WLCVS, WLBC, Primary Care Trust and LCC. The aim of the project is to support the development of the third sector, stimulate enterprise, support the economy, citizenship and volunteering. The project is primarily targeted at young people enabling them to access employment, training or volunteering opportunities in a streamlined way by involving all relevant partners. The project would also seek to assist with finance/debt problems in rural communities as well as providing vital health related advice, in particular alcohol-related services.

Councillor Owens thanked project leads Louise Dawson and Greg Mitten for their work to date on the bid.

A decision on PRG bids is expected from LSP Executive in September.

The group were keen to ensure they had a role in monitoring the specific outcomes of this project and that the current action plan should be updated to reflect this. *PH to update the action plan if the project was approved by the LSP.*

6. Skills and Worklessness Action Plan

PH circulated the 2009/10 Action Plan, together with an updated draft for 2010/11 for the group to review and provide input. Each action point was discussed in turn and individuals provided updates where relevant. *PH to update the action plan, re-circulate to the group and make available on the LSP website (as required to do so).*

7. Economic Regeneration Manager Update

PH provided an update to the group on the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), explaining that around 80% of the total assistance had gone to West Lancashire businesses so far.

PH gave an update on the Mid Lancashire Future Jobs Fund programme and how West Lancashire was in line to benefit more from the second phase with approximately 66 positions, than phase one which provided only 6 positions.

The Chairman invited members of the group to give an update on their experience of the programme.

MF explained that they had a number of placements which had been very successful, with various posts from loading/unloading to an IT graduate and a furniture polisher/restorer.

PP informed the group that they have a number of placements across Lancashire and had requested 20 posts from Mid Lancashire. Posts would include primary/acute care such as porters, but the nature of the posts depends on the individual Trust. PP explained that they were working with Southport & Ormskirk Hospital and that there would be potential opportunities for West Lancashire residents.

GS explained that WLCVS are involved in the programme, having secured a number of placements that had made a positive impact.

PH updated the group on the 2nd Homes funding and how membership with Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board (LBTB) was progressing. PH circulated a number of publications and provided some 'good news stories' on recent achievements for some of the Borough's businesses, including having some of the highest web hits on the LBTB website.

8. Any Other Business

PAR briefly mentioned the Single Work Programme and how LCDL had produced an internal briefing note on how they could assist with this programme, he also thought it was important to include within the Action Plan for this particular group.

PP reiterated PAR's concerns and felt it was important that this group keep a close eye on this programme for the future.

PP also added how the NHS are putting funding into their apprentices to include NVQ training and that those on Future Jobs Fund opportunities may be able to progress into apprentices or other employment opportunities. They are also encouraging Trusts to release staff to be able to undertake NVQ training. This would help raise the skills level within this sector.

In terms of local employment opportunities, Councillor Owens asked CH whether, in the College's experience, it was difficult to find local labour with the right skills. CH explained that this was difficult in practice because many of the skills required on a project like the new college building were very specialist due to the quality of the build. CH went on to explain that the developer is very keen to be involved in local community projects and has already worked with the Fire Service, Lancashire Police and Skelmersdale Football Club. In response to a comment from GS, CH agreed to provide details, through John Griffiths, on the community activities available from the developer.

PH circulated a copy of the latest 'Business Review' publication, which had a 'Hot 100' businesses feature for Lancashire and Bolton. A total of around 10 West Lancashire businesses were featured within the publication.

In PS' absence, PH provided a brief update on the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) activity, including Programmes for the Unemployed have been extended until March 2011, the Single Work Programme to be launched in April 2011, the SFA are downsizing and the IACS launches in Lancashire in August and will be called Next Step. The latest version of the 'map' of PfU provision was also circulated on his behalf.

9. Next Meeting

20th October 2010 at 10.00am, West Lancashire Investment Centre.