

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

**Minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011 meeting**

**Present:**

Greg Mitten	Chairman, West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service (WLCVS)
Maureen Fazal	Exsel (Int) CIC (West Lancashire Community Recycling)
Greg Swift	WLCVS and Quarry Bank social enterprise
Helen Watson	Lancashire Young Persons Service
Alison Quirk	Job Centre Plus
Jane Friend	Groundwork Wigan and West Lancashire
Pat Perkins	Skills Academy for Health
Brett Winn	Skelmersdale and Ormskirk College, WL Challenge
John Corish	West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC), WL Challenge
Paula Huber	WLBC

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Greg Mitten kindly agreed to act as Chairman for this meeting as unfortunately Councillor Owens was unable to attend due to other commitments. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and individual introductions were made.

**2. Apologies**

Councillor Owens WLBC and Joyce Dalton Lancashire Adult Learning. Phillip Russell from LCC also passed on his apologies, confirming that he would be unable to attend future meetings due to his post becoming redundant, but that Ian Filbin would attend in future.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

**4. Matters Arising**

- 4.1 There had been no update from Deep Green Community CIC, but MF confirmed that Julie Hotchkiss would be giving a presentation to the WL Social Enterprise Hub AGM in May.

PH has since received an update from Julie, who reports that they have met with the Homes and Community Agency re: the new framework for affordable housing, but it is too early for them to apply for funding and so they are exploring partnering with a Registered Provider (RSL). She is also meeting with WLBC's Housing Strategy Manager on issues relating to vulnerable people.

- 4.2 It had been suggested that the DWP Work Programme would be included as an item on the Agenda but this had not been possible due to the two prime contractors only recently becoming known and the forthcoming Stakeholder events taking place across the region, including Lancashire and Merseyside. PH would be attending the Lancashire event and DL would be attending the Merseyside event. JC would also be providing a brief summary within Agenda item 6.

## **5. Review of the Terms of Reference**

- 5.1 PH outlined the issues within the current Terms of Reference (dated March 2009) that were in need of updating. Key changes included the inclusion of the West Lancashire Challenge project and its SMART outcomes, and the removal of LAA performance indicators.
- 5.2 The group agreed to the revised Terms of Reference.

## **6. Policy update on Employment and Skills**

- 6.1 To help to put the WL Challenge project into a national context, JC provided a policy update on several key employment and skills issues, including the DWP Work Programme, Get Britain Working measures and Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility.
- 6.2 JC reported that A4E Ltd and Ingeus (UK) Ltd have been appointed onto the framework contract for the Work Programme in the North West (covering Lancashire, Cumbria, Merseyside and Halton). It is understood that Lancashire County Council would be meeting with A4E and feeding back to districts in due course and Ingeus would be holding stakeholder events across the NW over the next few weeks. JF explained that the Northwest Third Sector SPV Ltd has been set up to enable a wide range of Voluntary Sector Organisations to deliver on large scale DWP and SFA programmes.
- 6.3 JC gave brief examples of JCP's new and flexible approach to interventions to support claimants back into work. These include the creation of work clubs, the 'do it' volunteering website, extension of the Work Experience programme and the creation of volunteer mentors to help enterprise.
- 6.4 The relevant issues for this group arising from the Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers Strategy were highlighted, including the development of 3 leading indicators of social mobility to assess progress in the 16-24 year old age group, and restating of other policy measures inc. the 'Inspiring the Future' on-line matching service for schools and volunteers, a new business compact for fairer, more open internships and the establishment of an all-age careers service by April 2012.
- 6.5 The Chairman thanked JC for the update and the group agreed it would be useful to have a policy update as an item on future agendas.

## **7. West Lancashire Challenge Project**

- 7.1 JC explained that all project team members are now in post and briefly explained the roles of the individuals, including Gillian Hughes WLCVS, BW, JC and the two apprentices A Lambie and A Kirby, who may attend future meetings to assist with minute preparation.
- 7.2 JC circulated an A3 summary sheet detailing all the SMART outcomes for the project. An early indication of how each outcome would be achieved was given and that milestones would be developed to ensure each output was achieved.
- 7.3 In response to a question from DL, BW explained the Passport activity and how this initiative would help to steer young people into training, volunteering or employment, but would also act as a motivational tool to help with other life skills, such as health or debt-related issues. The team are currently developing the passport document, which should be available for the launch event in Summer.

*(With regards to LSP publicity procedures, it states within the terms of the LSP Service Level Agreement that the use of the LSP logo on the publicity materials relating to the WL Challenge project, must be agreed by the Chairman of this group. This will therefore be arranged separately with Councillor Owens.)*

- 7.4 In terms of the business engagement element to the project, JC explained that good links are now developing with partners including the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and work had begun with Members of the WL Social Enterprise Hub to ascertain what they would like to see from the project. *JC agreed to invite NAS to make a presentation to the next meeting of the group.*

## **7b Hotter Comfort Shoes**

- 7b.1 Councillor Owens had requested this item be added to the Agenda to stimulate a discussion around the positive action partners could take once they become aware of potential job creation opportunities and how the group could work together to ensure the business was supported in a co-ordinated way.
- 7b.2 There had been recent press coverage of Hotter Shoes' investment in the business and the creation of new jobs. JC confirmed he had acted on this coverage by writing to the Managing Director to introduce the project and explain how he could assist with employment support.
- 7b.3 AQ added that she had also tried to make contact with Hotter, but had so far been unsuccessful and asked that should JC receive a positive response, if he could share this information. *JC agreed to share information with AQ.*

- 7b.4 The group debated how there are many agencies looking to hit their targets and that there was always the danger of several organisations knocking on the same doors offering similar services. It was felt by members of the group that a ‘speed dating’ or similar event may help to find out what each organisation was offering to businesses and a suggestion by DL that this could possibly be held for a £10 fee.
- 7b.5 It was agreed that BW and JC would take this away and give it further thought, possibly building this into one of the launch events for the project. JC’s would be acting in an honest broker capacity and that he is already trying to find out about other partner activity so that he is able to signpost whenever possible.

## **8. Any Other Business**

- 8.1 PH reported that the Year 2 funding bid into Second Homes for the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board membership had been successful and thanked the group for their support.
- 8.2 The Chairman asked each member of the group to provide brief feedback on their respective organisations.
- 8.3 MF reported on a number of areas of interest, including:
- 108 individuals had attended the WL Social Enterprise Awards, the event had been a great success and something they would look to replicate in the future.
  - Silent Night contract for mattress deconstruction, this contract is still secure and work on a new unit was underway.
  - Help Direct painting and decorating contract for their new enterprise ‘Paint Shed’, which would potentially be a mentoring opportunity for young people.
  - ‘Bike Shed’, the bicycle recycling scheme was also making good progress, with interest shown from various parties.
  - ‘Tool Shed’, involved a retired skilled craftsman passing on skills to young people. With the designer company Red or Dead commissioning 50 pieces of furniture that Wayne Hemmingway would be putting his name to.
  - 4 adult apprentices in post.
- 8.4 AQ reported that there had been no recent redundancy notifications and although there are ongoing changes within JCP, there are no changes in terms of the Skelmersdale or Ormskirk offices.
- 8.5 HW reported the way NEETs are split out by Government has changed and this impacts on WL figures. Previously if a young person went to College in Wigan for example, they would not be counted on the WL figures, but on Wigan’s figures, this has now changed and will be

based on where the person lives that is counted. YPS are also going through a major reorganisation.

- 8.6 GS reported they were holding free computing training/access to the Internet and how they are looking to develop a new computer procurement service for IT training and equipment.
- 8.7 DL reported how Skills for Health are downsizing, but this will not affect the Health Academy. Apprenticeships ongoing and includes pre-employment initiatives. Of the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) placements, around 65% have secured employment and it is expected there will be around 1,000 new vacancies within the NHS (NW) over the next 12 months. The Academy is able to access internal NHS vacancies to enable intervention and there are real positive examples to show how well this is working. DL happy to talk to partners about this work in more detail.
- 8.8 PH highlighted key issues relating to the work of this group, including the recently agreed Local Enterprise Partnership for Lancashire, the Council's Major Service Review, the WL Challenge project and liaising with the LSP Executive regarding the Tourist Board membership.
- 8.9 JF reported on the changes within Groundwork explaining how previous geographic leads have become thematic and that she would remain cross cutting. Colin Greenhalgh is Programme Director leading on employment and Skills. Groundwork are involved with FJF and the DWP Work Programme and are now an Approved City and Guilds Centre. Groundwork had also made a UK application to become a National Citizen Service.
- 8.10 BW informed the group that the keys to the new College building would be ready 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011 and it was planned that students would be enrolled within the new College building. There would be an official launch on the 29<sup>th</sup> November for partners and the 30<sup>th</sup> November for the community.
- 8.11 GM reported that WLCVS had been highlighted as a model example with regards to the work of the ABCD group. The PCT are also reviewing all their voluntary sector funding and that funding for the VCF sector was changing on a County level, becoming more activity/impact/output and outcome based.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

20<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at 10.00am  
West Lancashire Investment Centre