

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

**Minutes of Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

**Present:**

Councillor Adrian Owens	Portfolio Holder Regeneration and Estates (Chairman)
Louise Dawson	Skelmersdale & Ormskirk College
Ian Filbin	Lancashire County Council (LCC)
Phyllis Roberts	Lancashire Young Peoples Service (YPS)
Pat Perkins	Skills Academy for Health
Lynn Hayes	Job Centre Plus (JCP)
Jane Friend	Groundwork Wigan and West Lancashire
Maureen Fazal	Exsel (Int) CIC & WL Social Enterprise Hub
Greg Swift	West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service (WLCVS) & Quarry Bank Social Enterprise
Paula Huber	West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC)
John Corish	WLBC
Alex Lambie	WLBC

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, providing a brief update on the Borough's economy, stating that figures for young people out of work and training had gone down by around 300. He also went on to say that a business he had spoken who had made the decision to come back to base themselves in West Lancashire had commented on the spirit in the Borough being a contributing factor. The Chairman thanked the attendees for their part in the creation of that good spirit. Individual Introductions were then made by attendees.

**2. Apologies**

Greg Mitten, WLCVS and Dawn Lord, Skills Academy for Health.

**3. Presentation from the National Apprenticeship Service**

Paula Gibson gave a presentation on Apprenticeships and the role of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). The presentation helped to raise awareness of apprenticeships and to explain what an apprenticeship is and just how important it can be for people of all ages that may not be suited to the academic route, but added that there should be no stigmatism or suggestion that apprenticeships are at a lower standard to academic qualifications. In some areas of work they can indeed be more beneficial.

Paula provided details of some of the key issues and challenges, including:

- Employer engagement and finding suitable high quality training opportunities.
- 30% of apprentices in Lancashire are over 18 years old.
- There is a Government focus on 16-18 year olds.
- NAS have a business support unit to work specifically with businesses.

- There are higher level Apprenticeships up to level 4 (Foundation Degree).
- Apprenticeships are much more diverse than traditional occupations such as Plumbing and construction.
- Important sectors in the Borough include manufacturing, visitor economy, low carbon and retail.
- Historically Lancashire has had the highest levels of apprentices in the NW.
- There are currently 500 vacancies in Lancashire.

#### **4. Minutes of the last meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

Dawn Lord had incorrectly been noted as present at the last meeting when it was actually Pat Perkins, with this amendment the minutes were agreed as a correct record.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

LD updated the group on the revised launch date for the new college building, which would be 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012 instead of the original November date due to possible winter weather issues.

#### **6. Rural Development Programme for England (West Lancashire update)**

- 6.1 PH provided commentary to the report circulated, explaining how the programme had been running for two years and that West Lancashire businesses are doing very well having 14 of the 19 approved applications. 5 applicants have been successful in Basic Services applications, 3 of which are from West Lancashire. The programme is no longer delivered by NWDA but will be transferred over to DEFRA in the next few weeks.

The Chairman complemented the dedication of Council staff to this programme in its early stages of development, as it was unclear at the time the full benefits to the Borough.

- 6.2 JC gave an update on Porters Horticultural who have shown interest in taking on apprentices and they are also considering using Skelmersdale and Ormskirk College's horticultural course to work with.
- 6.3 LD suggested that each successful applicant could be encouraged to recruit an apprentice. *PH reported that she does ask that links are made with JCP but agreed to take this suggestion back to the Local Action Group Executive.*

7. There was an error on the Agenda, with no item 7.

#### **8. Lancashire County Council- Future Jobs Fund Update**

- 8.1 IF provided an update for the group explaining Lancashire's FJF was delivered over 2 phases with 89 opportunities committed to West Lancashire from 8 different organisations, with nearly 100% of those to West Lancashire residents. IF reported that around 50% of the FJF resulted in a positive outcome, with an 80% retention rate, 87% of which were aged between 18-24

8.2 PP mentioned the Skills Academy for Health contributed to a report to Government on how the programme could be a cost effective way to get people into employment.

8.3 The Chairman stated that he was encouraged by the fact that many of the opportunities offered in FJF, were from members of this LSP group.

## **9. Policy Update on Employment and Skills Issues, Including Work Programme**

9.1 JC delivered the policy update informing the group that the two companies chosen for delivering the Work Programme are A4E Ltd, who will deliver their services themselves, and Ingeus who have subcontracted their West Lancashire service to Inspire2Independance (I2I) who will start work in the autumn. JC said that both himself and PH would be meeting I2I soon.

9.2 PP reported that Skills Academy for Health has been talking to A4E Ltd and that A4E would be looking to get funding into the project before they start working towards targets. They believe that A4E will be ready in early spring next year to be fully geared up to meet targets. PP added that A4E need their data checking to make sure that it is a secure system regarding the Data Protection Act and this will then help their providers with referring clients.

9.3 LH explained to the group that from the JCP point of view, they are struggling with some of the referrals due to the DWP's security systems, there was a case where some of the referrals did not have a candidate name because they were not allowed to share that information. LD said that she understood there have been problems with TuPe transfers.

9.4 The Chairman suggested that it would be useful if a JCP representative could give updates on the changes to their functions and structure at a future meeting. *LH agreed to take this suggested back to her organisation.*

9.5 MF mentioned that referrals are good but it is difficult and time consuming to train and give experience to individuals if there was no financial assistance.

9.6 JC explained there had been a report produced on Internships in terms of making them more open and transparent and how they benefit individuals.

JC then went on to review some stats that had been compiled from the National Skills Audit:

- Nearly 1 in 7 of those classed as unemployed have a degree, (International Labour Organisation definition).
- People working in 0.2% of companies employing more than 250 people on the other hand account for over half of all jobs.
- UK wide, 95% of small companies employ less than 10 people, the people working in the 95% of these companies, only account for just over a quarter of all jobs.

- Overall, there are relatively few skills shortages in England, with only 1 in 20 establishments suffering such shortages, and in sum they amounted to just 0.6% of total employment.

## **10. West Lancashire Challenge project**

10.1 The Chairman thanked Skelmersdale and Ormskirk College for hosting the launch event in conjunction to the college summer fair.

10.2 JC told the group that 250 people had attended the launch event/summer fair. He went on to say that a Challenge outcome was met on the day of the launch event regarding the volunteering hours that the college staff dedicated to the day. The project now has a dedicated telephone for all enquiries and the number is 01695 712645, and has now got its marketing materials ready for future events that could create an opportunity to publicise the project.

10.3 The Challenge is looking to support the care industry as a pilot in taking on apprenticeship and placement opportunities, therefore a targeted letter will go out to selected care industry companies.

10.4 In September the college is thinking about putting on a breakfast event for companies to attend and the Challenge could promote itself to the companies. In addition LD mentioned that an idea had been put forward where they could get some of the Challenge's potential passport holders in to speak to the company in a short "speed networking" mechanism to help the individual meet the companies. She also mentioned that a lot of networking for different volunteer market stalls had happened on the day of the launch event, which was a big positive. There was also the idea of a mini roadshow to help with the promotion of the project, outside of Skelmersdale, to Ormskirk, Burscough, Parbold and other parts of the Borough.

10.5 JC provided the group with updates on each of the milestones including:

- The passport had been completed and some copies were circulated for the group to review the end product. JC went on to describe the Passport and how it works by giving working examples for the sections. The next big date for issuing the passport will be the college opening in September for the new academic year.
- LD said that for the expected 1200 16-18 year olds potentially joining the college they will endeavour to put everyone on the passport scheme, as well as the potential 500-600 adult learners.
- JC told the group that the project should hit its 2011 output target of getting 100 young people between 16-18 year olds on the passport service.
- Two successful Health & Wellbeing events have been held since the launch.
- LCF have undertaken some outreach programmes.
- The Challenge will also encourage advertising apprenticeship vacancies on the National Apprenticeship Service website.
- The Challenge has also investigated if the IT students at the college can create a West Lancashire Challenge website.

- JC and Gill Hughes of WLCVS gave a presentation to the Social Enterprise Hub AGM in May.

10.6 JC and PH had met with the local representative from the Federation of Small Businesses about the economy in general and the Challenge project.

10.7 In response to a question from IF, JC said that the Challenge and Passport service was for people of all ages both in and out of employment and training.

10.8 LD proposed an idea on the possibility of having a short video podcast on the website about what the West Lancashire Challenge does.

10.9 In response to a question from the Chairman, JC went on to explain that the LSP Executive will get a much more detailed report which will include the finance report and project progress.

## **11. Any Other Business**

11.1 PP Skills Academy for Health update- there are 100 pre-employment places with Liverpool Community College. Other colleges are looking to replicate the same pre-employment numbers such as Wigan, St Helens and Lancaster.

11.2 LD Skelmersdale and Ormskirk College update- the college will officially become West Lancashire College from 1<sup>st</sup> August, the keys will be handed over on 11<sup>th</sup> August and the new cohort for the college will be 5<sup>th</sup> September. There will be a children's nursery with 72 places. There are also new curriculum areas being offered and they are also looking to recruit some apprentices. More will be committed to adult learners and will also be working with JCP to improve the employment gateway. LD offered the LSP group a tour around the new college in the future.

11.3 IF LCC update- LCC have gone through a restructure and will be split into two functions, Business support and Land and Property.

11.4 GS WLCVS update- WLCVS and Sefton CVS have been successful through a bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund for the two areas in association with Sefton BC, LCC and WLBC. Two development workers will be employed to work with the Councils to support local communities in relation to transport issues connected to the visitor economy.

11.5 PR YPS update- Because of cohort changes the NEET percentage has dropped to half the percentage of last year and the age in which you can be consider NEET has changed from 16-18 to 16-20 year olds. PR said that there will be a need to monitor 19-20 year olds in terms of how do they get help getting into training and employment. This age band may have 'A' level qualifications but struggle to find jobs in their chosen employment sector.

There is a new manager for YPS, Nighat Parveen, who will be covering Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire boroughs. Grant Murdoch will now be covering Preston, Wyre and Lytham areas. On 31<sup>st</sup> July, many staff

will be leaving and the new layout will not be known until the structure is in place. In addition, the Ormskirk centre for YPS is closing soon.

A provider from St Helens has offered to run an Ambassador programme over the summer period however there are only 8 places. The course will help increase confidence in young people of West Lancashire.

LD reported that £200,000 had been secured from ESF, whilst making the point that there will always be a NEET cohort of young people that will require support.

PR continued to say that the Pathways Programme was struggling for interest because of the EMA budget cut, although LD said that there could be a possible replacement to EMA. PR stated that despite the issues West Lancashire is still doing very well.

11.6 MF Social Enterprise update- SE HUB now has 55 members and there is 155 registered with Selnet. There are two new group members for the Hub, Julie Hodges and Melanie Bryan. A representative from JCP is going to the next meeting to give a presentation about engaging young people. The 'Paint Shop' at West Lancashire Recycling is up and running.

11.7 LH JCP update- Work programme referrals are happening daily, no real feedback on how successful yet as it is still quite a new programme. The "Get Britain Working" service is still growing.

11.8 JF Groundwork update- The National Citizenship Service delivery will be piloted in Wigan and they are bidding for 2012 delivery to cover the Lancashire area. The Chairman asked if the service would appeal to everyone and JF replied that they felt it would. Groundwork is planning to work with the Work Programme sub contractors and are already part of the knowledge bank for Wigan providers.

11.9 JC update- Alex Lambie and Amy Kirby, the two Council apprentices had completed their level 2 NVQ qualification and have signed up for the Level 3. The Group congratulated both Alex and Amy

## **12. Next Meeting**

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and looked forward to seeing the Group on 23rd November 2011 at 10.00am. Dates of 2012 meetings:

- Wed 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012
- Wed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012
- Wed 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012
- Wed 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012