

Minutes from the North Norfolk Skills Partnership Steering Group held at Merchants' Place, Cromer on 19 March 2007 at 2.00 pm

Agenda Item		Action
	<p>Present: Nicky Bennett – Voluntary Sector Gillian Bolam – North Norfolk Business Forum Tim Ellen – Paston College FE sector Samir Jeraj – Research Graduate John P Morgan – Skills Partnership Development Officer Su Pointer – Health and Social Care Sector Robin Smith – North Norfolk District Council Jose Socao – North Norfolk District Council Melissa Wallis-Riches – Meridian East Geoff Thompson – North Norfolk District Council Don Venvell (Chair) Julie Worrell – UEA representing HE Sector</p> <p>Apologies: Darren Maydew – Business Forum Representative Richard Polley – Learning and Skills Council Rena Savage/Judy Youngs – Norfolk Adult Education</p>	
1	<p>Introduction and Welcome DV welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves as there were several additional members at this meeting. RS had invited JS and GT to the meeting as they had been gathering information about possible funding streams and they would speak about this later in the meeting.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting These were accepted as a correct record.</p>	
3	<p>Matters Arising <i>Attendance at Business Forum meeting</i> A key feature of this group was to be a partner with the Business Forum so some members attended the last Business Forum Executive Committee meeting. The Skills Partnership aims had been presented to that meeting. DV felt this had been very useful. It was clear that skills were at the forefront of the business agenda. There was evidence of two-way communication between skills providers and business. Ian Doughty (Chairman of the Business Forum) had pointed out how useful 'A' level business students could be and the Forum was looking to encourage businesses to work together with schools and colleges. It had also been suggested that business people could be on the governing bodies of schools and colleges. DV said he would write to the Governor Support Unit about this with a copy to the Business Forum. JM will be joining the Business Forum Board in order to ensure joint working.</p> <p><i>Membership of Group</i> JM had set up regular meetings with the heads of the Cromer schools to encourage them to work with businesses, to which they had been very receptive. This needed to be followed up with a trial. It was agreed it would be good to have a schools representative on this group. There is a new post of 14-19 Development Officer being created by the LSC and it was agreed this person should be asked to join this group. JM had contacted John Holt from Jobcentre Plus who was very supportive but, owing to other commitments, would not be able to attend regularly. However he asked that the papers be circulated to him and agreed to attend when the group felt it necessary. In order to have a Union representative, JM agreed to contact the TUC as well as the GMB and Unison. Several Area Partnerships are already represented on the group. JM reported that Roger Allen from Connexions was interested in joining the group but if this was not possible he would suggest someone else. It is important to have a business representative at the Skills Partnership meetings, therefore the Business</p>	<p align="center">DV</p> <p align="center">JM</p>

	<p>Forum were asked to send a substitute if DM was unable to attend. GB said she was happy to attend as well if required. It was agreed to keep the issue of membership on the agenda in order to identify any gaps.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Skills Partnership should have a representative on the OAG of NNCP. GB agreed to raise this with Beatrix Ward.</p> <p><i>Participation - Access</i></p> <p>It is very important to increase participation in learning and skills. SJ is researching what courses are available locally as well as what skills are required. Lack of transport was felt to be a big barrier. The Business Forum attends meetings of the Access4life project working group which is looking at local solutions to transport problems. This should include a whole range of accessible learning. It is important that buses and transport needs are matched.</p> <p>RS suggested that the group resolve to focus on 4 or 5 priorities so that projects can be presented to the LSP for further development. GT informed the group that there was considerable European funding available for projects in Norfolk. The funding was available to improve competitiveness and employment so skills and training formed a large part of this. Once the group had a clear idea of proposed projects, funding could be sought. It was agreed that a key item for the next meeting would be to decide on 4 or 5 projects for the group. JM was already working on this and would prepare a list of suggestions in advance of the next meeting. RS suggested that once the projects were agreed they should be presented to the Business Forum for their comments.</p> <p>SP informed the group that care homes in the area work in clusters to provide training for their staff either by bringing trainers to the workplace or by staff sharing transport to trainers. It is important to look at different ways of providing training eg using video conferencing and laptop loan schemes.</p> <p>MWR mentioned that more disabled people are now looking for work and their skills' requirements needed to be considered. It is also important to educate employers so they did not discriminate against the disabled.</p> <p><i>Cycle of Meetings</i></p> <p>The suggested dates of the next three meetings were agreed. JM agreed to circulate some more dates.</p>	<p>GB</p> <p>JM</p> <p>JM</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Reports</p> <p><i>Development Officer</i></p> <p>A recent LAA seminar had looked at a number of projects from the action plan and as a result of this the Skills Partnership document had been revised. JM had circulated the proposed revisions. The second column had been aligned with strategy 2 of Shaping Norfolk's Future. There is an LSP requirement that this group is accountable. JM had started on the next stage which was identifying actions which would be a basis for future bids. He would prepare a discussion document on this for the next meeting. The Skills Partnership has been established and it is now time to get something done. However, it is important to realise what has already been achieved; this group has had a series of meetings, has made decisions and is working with business. The group should now focus on projects which will gain funding.</p> <p>JM was attending Business Forum events and Merchants' Place had held its own event the previous Saturday. Unfortunately public participation had been low but it had been a good opportunity for learning organisations to network. JM will be attending the Business Forum breakfast meeting in Fakenham on 27 March. There will also be a Business Forum event in North Walsham towards the end of April or early May. An event was also planned for Stalham. All members of this group were welcome to attend.</p> <p>With regard to Train to Gain, JM had received some publicity material as well as some figures for the County as a whole. A telesales approach had been suggested, but this was not thought to be a good idea. It was agreed that marketing had been poor, however, RS had been told that they were well on target. It was still early days. SP commented that often it was not possible to meet the eligibility criteria. It was agreed that JM should continue to signpost people to Train to Gain.</p>	<p>JM</p>

	<p><i>Research Worker</i> SJ had been looking at strategy documents, key indicators, census information etc. He had extracted information about rural deprivation in North Norfolk to support bids to EEDA. He had also started to make a database on the provision of courses locally. He will also look at work-based learning through LSC contacts. SJ agreed to produce a summary of his work for future meetings.</p> <p><i>Financial</i> The circulated document now reflects the budget versus actual and was more relevant.</p>	SJ
5	<p>Other Matters <i>LSP Evaluation Requirement</i> This had already been mentioned earlier.</p> <p><i>Learndirect Survey</i> DV circulated an EDP report which said that 34% of adults in Norfolk do not develop new skills because of pressure on their time. It also mentioned that the skills shortage was chronic in some areas of rural deprivation. This supports what the Skills Partnership hopes to achieve.</p> <p><i>COWA (College of West Anglia) Meeting Preview</i> It was hoped the meeting would discuss wider and more strategic issues than just the two learning centres closing. The most important thing was to continue to provide learning facilities and to look positively at how this may be done. SP thought this would be the first of a number of meetings to clarify COWA's position and look at future provision. It was felt appropriate that the Skills Partnership should chair this meeting. A report on the results of this meeting would be made to the next Skills Partnership meeting.</p>	
6	<p>Issues to be Raised by Individual Members There were none.</p>	
7	<p>Next Meeting Dates The next meeting will be on 25 April at 10.00 am.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 4.40 pm.</p>	

Signed:

Dated: