

Minutes from the North Norfolk Skills Partnership Steering Group held at Merchants' Place, Cromer on 18 July 2007 at 10.00 am

Agenda Item		Action
	<p>Present: Roger Allen - Connexions Gillian Bolam – North Norfolk Business Forum Tim Ellen – Paston College FE sector Karen Hudson (substitute for Melissa Wallis-Riches) – Meridian East Samir Jeraj – Research Graduate Pat McIntosh – Norfolk Learning Difficulties John P Morgan – Skills Partnership Development Officer Robin Smith – North Norfolk District Council Don Venvell (Chair) Steve Walker – GMB Union Learning Rep Julie Worrell – UEA representing HE Sector</p>	
1	<p>Introduction and Welcome DV welcomed everyone to the meeting. As there were some new attendees, everyone introduced themselves. DV was pleased there is now very wide representation on the group.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies: Pauline Chamberlain – Fakenham College/Learning Community Jon Holt – Jobcentre Plus Ric Martin – Norfolk Learning Partnership Su Pointer – Health and Social Care Sector Richard Polley – Learning and Skills Council Rena Savage – Norfolk Adult Education Geoff Thompson – North Norfolk District Council Melissa Wallis-Riches – Meridian East Judy Youngs – Norfolk Adult Education</p> <p>Jan Munn, Co-ordinator for the Learning System Group had been invited but was unable to attend this meeting. She will attend future meetings of the group.</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p>	
4	<p>Matters Arising DV asked if there were any matters arising other than those covered by other agenda items. JM had prepared a draft response to the ESF framework document which had been circulated. A few amendments had been made as a result of this and the final letter had been submitted. Confirmation of receipt had been received. JM had identified four documents for inclusion in an information pack. These were the Action Plan, Terms of Reference, list of membership and the silo chart (which would be updated). Merchants' Place folders could be used to hold these documents but it was suggested that separate Skills Partnership folders would be preferable as the group should build its own identity. JM agreed to seek quotes. GB commented that the Business Forum were in the process of rebranding and could put JM in touch with their designer, Rebecca Maun. JM had invited Jan Munn to be a member of this Partnership. She spent 50% of her time working with 14-19 year olds and 50% as the Learning Community Co-ordinator in Reepham. This is outside North Norfolk but its catchment area does include some of this District. TE felt she would be a great asset to the group. It was agreed that with Jan's membership, the group was representative of all sectors.</p>	JM

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Issues to be Raised by Individual Members

TE reported that there will be an important realignment in the supply of adult learning in North Norfolk. Adult Education will take over all provision of courses for adults and Paston College would no longer have any dedicated adult provision. No full time staff will be made redundant and funds will be transferred. This should cut duplication and administration thus leaving more money for learners. The 19-25 year olds level 3 take-up has been particularly good. Also, Train to Gain continues to grow.

GB commented that companies like Crisp Malting still could not find suitable staff locally. It is important to raise the profile of this sort of company and demonstrate that there are many employment opportunities in North Norfolk.

RS said that all businesses should be encouraged to train their staff in the workplace.

GB said that perhaps a case study demonstrating the benefits of this would help.

JW informed the group that City College and the UEA ran a BA in Professional Studies which was generic and developed management skills. She will send a copy to JM. DV queried how widely this had been promoted in schools. JW said it had been advertised in the EDP.

JW

RA informed the Partnership that Connexions were preparing an online database of all courses, training and apprenticeships available locally for 14-19 year olds. Eventually it is hoped that students will be able to apply for all courses in one place. This is being piloted in West Norfolk.

JW mentioned a new MBA course the University was introducing. She also said that the University is proposing to place some of its staff off campus, for example at The Forum, and thus begin more outreach into the community. RS suggested they might like to look at the needs of sparse rural communities. JW said there was already some mobile provision.

RS had brought two Government documents to the meeting for information: 'The Contribution of Skills to Business Performance' and 'The Role of Skills in the Labour Market'. Members were encouraged to take copies.

SW informed the Partnership that the large number of migrant workers was causing several issues. There was exploitation of these workers, many of whom were skilled but unable to speak English. Benefit forms are too difficult and migrants often feel they should not claim benefit as they have not contributed. Employers should not see migrants as cheap labour. TE commented that there is the opportunity for co-finance money for a project to deal with these issues.

It is difficult to convince employers that training shop floor staff is an investment and lead to staff retention and good morale. GB said it would be good to have a case study of how this helps a company. She said she would speak to Ian Doughty about this.

PM informed the group that she is operationally responsible for the Holt Day Services which dealt with a large number of adults with learning difficulties. Historically it had been care provision but now they are looking for employment opportunities. They had two part-time outreach workers with links to adult learning who dealt with preparation for work. The difficulty is finding work placements for these adults whose ages ranged from 20 to over 60. Their catchment area is the whole of North Norfolk but a large number of these adults live in the Cromer and Sheringham area. GB suggested this issue could be brought to the attention of the Business Forum. PM informed the group that both employers and the employee would be supported. GB commented that it is important to inform businesses about this and reassure them they would be supported. PM said she had spoken to Holt Chamber of Trade. GB suggested raising

	<p>their profile by having a stand at the Business Forum events.</p> <p>KH informed the group that she worked primarily with young people with mental health problems. She tried to identify training needs prior to employment. There are several thousand people in this position and many go from one course to another never finding a job. SJ had no figures on people in this position but he would try to find the information. JM had noted that the percentage of people with learning difficulties is very high in this area. SJ commented that there is also a high take-up of incapacity benefit locally. SW informed the group that Remploy had successfully employed many people with disabilities and learning difficulties. The majority of disabled people are capable of holding down a job.</p> <p>RA commented that Connexions would like to be involved in looking at ways to support young people with learning difficulties.</p> <p>RS remarked that business is now more likely to take an ethical stance so might be more willing to employ disabled people.</p> <p>JM informed the group that the Business Forum had a skills exchange on its website. This had not been developed yet but could potentially be a very useful tool.</p>	SJ
6	<p>COWA Closures Update</p> <p>DV commented that the papers circulated demonstrated an important step forward in tackling this problem.</p> <p>JM asked if the group were happy for him to take this report to the District Council. RA commented that, in the note at the end of the report, 'Fakenham College' should read 'Extended Rural Federation'. The last sentence should also be removed. Apart from these minor amendments, the report was approved. JM agreed to take this to Steve Blatch first. Then the report would go to the Council's Management Team and Cabinet.</p> <p><i>Action Research IAG Project Proposal</i></p> <p>JM is working on a number of projects to discover what skills are needed and where training is provided. He gave a presentation showing how he will approach the IAG project, research across the District, how he will identify needs and a map showing needs identified already. Once needs were known, this information could be used to influence provision. It is necessary to look at key settlements and work with local area partnerships. Cromer and Sheringham already provide an IAG service now and this is also being set up in Fakenham. Mundesley and Briston/Melton Constable are key deprivation areas which would also benefit from this service. An IAG centre is also being set up in Stalham with Leader + funding.</p> <p>JM circulated copies of a survey he is intending to distribute widely in the District. It was suggested this could be sent out in Outlook. He asked for feedback on the layout and questions. He will email copies to all members. Some forms had already been sent out and some replies been received. A database will be built which will be easy to analyse and so inform the planning process for training. This could potentially tie in with other projects, eg Access4Life which is hoping to provide services in village halls. RS commented that the LDF had identified service villages under the key settlements which might also be points of delivery. This is a large programme which needs to be presented to the LSP. JM said he will complete an application form for submission to the OAG. JW offered a letter in support, as did others.</p> <p>RA commented that it is important to be aware that schools in the District are divided into cluster groups which may not coincide with area partnerships.</p> <p><i>Learning Bus Project Proposal</i></p> <p>Initial costings had been done for this, which could be very effective in rural areas.</p>	<p>JM</p> <p>JM</p> <p>JM</p> <p>JM</p>
7	<p>Other Matters/Reports</p> <p><i>Development Officer</i></p> <p>JM had been invited to join the County-wide Personal Community Development Learning Group and he had attended their first meeting last Friday.</p> <p><i>Research Worker</i></p>	

	<p>SJ is working on a questionnaire to businesses in North Norfolk. He had consulted widely to make this an effective and reasonable document. There will shortly be a meeting between the Chairs of the Skills Partnership and Business Forum, their Co-ordinators, SJ and RS to agree the final questionnaire which will be sent out in September.</p> <p><i>Financial</i></p> <p>JM reported that the spending is as per schedule. He will be happy to circulate a spreadsheet on request.</p>	
8	<p>Events Programme – 11 September at North Walsham</p> <p>The Business Forum, in conjunction with the Griffon Area Partnership, is holding an event at North Walsham Community Centre on 11 September.</p>	
9	<p>AOB and Next Meeting Dates</p> <p>GB asked if it would be possible to have a list of contact details of members of this group and JM said he would circulate this.</p> <p>The next meetings will be on 12 September, 24 October and 5 December, all commencing at 10.00 am. RS suggested using different venues for these meetings and JM agreed to look into this. KH suggested using the Holt centre.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 11.50 am.</p>	JM

Signed:

Dated: