

Minutes from the North Norfolk Skills Partnership Steering Group held at Merchants' Place, Cromer on 2 December 2008 at 10.00 am

Agenda Item		Action
	<p>Present: Roger Allen (RA) – Connexions Pauline Chamberlain (PC) – Fakenham College Paul Dunning (PD) – 14-19 Worker Tim Ellen (TE), Paston College Jon Holt (JH) – Jobcentre Plus David Martin (DM) – Business Link Rik Martin (RM) – Norfolk Learning Partnership John P Morgan (JPM) – Skills Partnership Development Officer Catherine Plewman (CP) – Poppyland Partnership Su Pointer (SP) – Health and Social Care Sector Richard Polley (RP) – Learning and Skills Council Gill Powell (GP) – North Norfolk Business Forum Jose Socao (JS) – North Norfolk District Council Robin Smith (RS) – North Norfolk District Council Geoff Thompson (GT) – North Norfolk District Council Don Venvell (DV) – Chairman Steve Walker (SW) – Skills Broker, Train to Gain Beatrix Ward (BW) – North Norfolk Community Partnership Pam Williams (PW) - Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service Judy Youngs (JY) – Norfolk Adult Education</p>	
1	<p>Introduction and Welcome DV welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies: Jan Munn – 14-19 Learning Systems Group Mark Stead – Easton College Andy Williams – Fakenham College Julie Worrell – UEA representing HE Sector</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p>	
4	<p>Matters Arising <i>Interreg</i> GT reported that he had attended a meeting in Holland along with RS and JPM. They had been disappointed that only two other of the five partners had attended that meeting and there was therefore concern about lack of commitment to the project. They were waiting to hear from the consultants with the application form and information about the project. It had been agreed to continue to take this forward but also to look for other sources of funding for the IAG and VBS projects. RS commented that he had hoped Interreg funding would provide important revenue funding. JPM is preparing the financial model, which is required by 12 December and the draft application will be ready by 6 February. GT remarked that this Partnership is a real strength to feed into the bid and RS said it would be useful to have a letter of support from the Chairman of the Skills Partnership naming members, which was agreed. The Partnership will be kept informed of progress.</p> <p><i>North Norfolk Centre for Enterprise</i> A paper had been presented to the District Council's Cabinet in November suggesting five different funding options. Cabinet had asked that these be reduced to two so a further report has now been submitted giving two options with the Council's commitment being either £500,000 or £2.8m. Cabinet were considering the budget for next year so once that has been agreed further cashflow projections could be</p>	

explored. ERDF has agreed in principle to increase its funding from £800,000 to £1.3m. A full business case has still to be submitted. The funding application will be made in January or February so the building could commence towards the middle or end of next year. It is still on target to open during Spring 2010. If the Council are unable to part-fund the project it would still be possible to continue using private sector investment. RS thanked JS for all his hard work on this project.

14-19 Diplomas

PD reported that 14 lines of learning will be available in the Northern area by 2010. The result of applications for the current round will be known in March. All lines will be available by 2013. There was concern about lack of employer engagement. A consultation paper had been produced which had been favourably received. It concluded that a strategy is required to increase employer engagement.

SP commented that she was disappointed that, despite the health and social care sector being one of the biggest employers locally, there was to be no training until Gateway 4. PD explained that consortia had applied for diplomas which they felt confident to be able to deliver rather than those required for the area. SP agreed to help PD put a bid together for health and social care.

TE commented that diplomas are the biggest challenge for education providers in recent years and their success is vital to the economic development of the UK. Therefore it is important their introduction is not rushed.

JPM informed the Partnership that, at the last Business Forum Executive Committee meeting, there had been a discussion on diplomas and GP and JPM were liaising to get information out to employers. DM was concerned that diplomas were being driven by skills of providers and what young people wanted without finding out what the business community required. He suggested education establishments could ask the Skills Partnership for their input to fill this gap. PD agreed it would be useful to have a central focus for contact between schools and business. He agreed to discuss this with DM.

JPM informed the group he had attended the Shaping Norfolk's Future Conference last week where a headteacher had asked business leaders what skills they required. The response had been that there was concern about lack of basic skills, ie literacy, numeracy and communication. TE agreed this was true but the diplomas aimed to address this lack and to motivate young people to achieve these skills. RP commented that when young people saw the point of having good basic skills, their achievement in them improved. He was encouraged that the first diploma, construction, had been over-subscribed.

DV was concerned that there was insufficient guidance and RA agreed that the quality of guidance varied significantly and needed to be improved. SP commented that the ambassador programme, where young, enthusiastic people visited schools to share what their job was like, was successful.

RS felt it was important to have a long term vision with a plan of how to achieve that goal. He suggested that the Skills Partnership and Business Forum get together to discuss predictive scenarios which would result in three papers, one saying what would happen if things stayed as they are, a second with best intentions and a third, gold standard. He hoped to get invitations out soon for this exercise.

PD left the meeting at this point.

Paston

TE informed the group that there were two hurdles to overcome to achieve the aim of a new college in North Walsham. The first was the District Council Planning Committee meeting on 18 December and the second was the LSC agreeing to fund it. There was some opposition locally to the new college which may result in the application being refused. Paston had looked at all possible sites for the college but this was the only viable one and TE said if this was refused then eventually there would not be a college in North Walsham. Council Officers supported the application.

SP

PD/DM

	<p>TE asked if Partnership members would be willing to write in support of the application. RP commented that the funding would only be available for a short time so in order to receive the necessary funding the application would need to be made soon. RS agreed the new college was vital to the local economy and would, along with the new Centre for Enterprise, raise aspirations in the town. He also asked if the Chairman of the Skills Partnership and Business Forum would write letters of support to the Committee along with other members of this group, which was agreed. JPM agreed to circulate a draft letter as an example.</p> <p>DV asked why it was necessary to move and TE explained that the facilities were very poor and on three different sites. There was no room for growth or diversification which were necessary if the college is to survive. It would also be good to be near the railway.</p> <p>TE thanked members of the group for their support.</p> <p><i>NNSP Action Plan and LMI Tables</i> These had been circulated.</p> <p><i>Train to Gain</i> JPM had circulated a link to an Ofsted report about this. SW and JPM had also given a presentation at a Business Forum event in North Walsham where some good contacts had been made. They were also continuing to drip feed information to the Business Forum contacts through its newflash. DV commented that the Ofsted report had made some critical comments about Train to Gain. SW said this was based on 2007 and improvements had been made and they were now 25% above target. SP informed the group she was part of a consortium offering Train to Gain in North Norfolk. There was a lot of interest from employees and a high demand. All people trained are assessed for literacy and numeracy needs. RP commented that more providers are now contracting direct with the LSC rather than through consortia.</p> <p><i>VBS</i> JS reported this was on target with regard to projected beneficiaries. A closing report for Objective 2 funding is nearing submission. The project will be rolled out throughout the District from January 2009. Additional funding will be required to provide training and support from 1 April. They would like to purchase additional laptops and provide free Broadband if possible. DM felt this was an exemplar project and was very valuable. RS thanked DM for his support.</p>	<p>All JPM</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>NNCP Thematic Group The thematic groups will be meeting on 3, 8 and 10 December with the aim of mapping what exists in North Norfolk. This exercise will be presented to the next NNCP Board meeting.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Issues to be Raised by Individual Members Owing to lack of time, this item was deferred.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>AOB RS had attended a strategic Economic Development Officers' meeting recently where the formation of a rapid response force to deal with redundancies had been discussed. It was expected there would be a number of business closures in 2009. It is important to get sufficient notice of impending redundancies in order to help effectively.</p> <p>There will be a meeting to discuss the LSC Road Map on 9 December. The skills road map will be launched at the Skills Conference at the end of March. It would be good to have the support of the Skills Partnership for this so it was agreed to discuss it at the next meeting.</p> <p>Norfolk Unite is a consortium of third sector organisations formed with the aim of bidding for LSC funding. This would provide resources to help organisations develop learning and skills as well as business plans. JY commented that Voluntary Norfolk</p>	

	was not part of this consortium. The meeting closed at 12.15 pm.	
8	Date of Next Meeting The next meeting is on 20 January 2009.	

Signed:

Dated: