

Notes from Employment, Learning and Skills Mapping Meeting

Monday 12th June 2006, Kingsway Learning Centre

Attendees:

Lisa Driscoll
Gill Mortlock
Gary Collins
Gerry Fitzpatrick
Siobhan Saunders
Debbie Baxter
Kevin Mothersdale
Claire Bradbury
David Gray
Dave Atkinson
Ian Grady
Mike Bellairs

Apologies

Kirsty Evans
Elaine Masterson
Diane Sproson
Bill Badrock
Andy Page
Andrew Ellams

1) Introductions and Purpose of the meeting

Gill Mortlock introduced the meeting and explained the purpose of the day. The aim of the meeting was to begin to understand the work of all the agencies better, to look at the mapping information already received, to identify gaps, duplications, conflicts and cross-cutting themes and to begin to identify future activity for the partnership, including Local Area Agreements and links to the Neighbourhood Management Agenda.

2) Local Area Agreements

Ian Grady gave a brief presentation on Local Area Agreements and Halton's approach to developing them (copy attached), together with a timescale.

Questions and comments were invited and included:

KM thought that the process was good in terms of partnership involvement and questioned whether there ought to be a specific focus on deprived wards within the LAA. IG responded that this was increasingly the focus in Halton, particularly with NRF and was likely to form a feature of the LAA.

DA recognised the need for the public sector to drive the process but also asked about how easy it would be to also ensure the private sector were involved due to their lack of time and resources. GC is looking at private sector engagement as part of his remit, both on behalf of the partnership and HBC.

It was suggested that a useful enabling measure would be to look at extending data sharing protocols to ensure that we are able to target the areas most in need.

It was explained that by the end of June a draft outcomes framework would need to be submitted to GONW with some ideas of priority themes for the LAA. However, an all partnership event is to be held on 12th July at Halton Stadium to ensure that all partners are consulted and a partnership consensus is reached on priority themes.

GC questioned how the LAA would link in to the potential city-wide employment strategy currently under discussion within the GM sub-region. It was thought that whilst we may be able to ensure at the Halton level, it might be more difficult to achieve this on a sub-regional level.

Concerns were also raised over the new Deprived Area Funding from JCP. If this went into a City Region funding pot Halton may miss out on a fair share of the funding.

GC questioned how the Urban Renewal agenda would fit into the LAA, as this is a very specific programme. IG explained that there did not have to be one specific LAA theme for each of Halton's priorities, but rather that the themes should be cross-cutting across a range of partnerships.

3. Mapping Exercise

LD distributed copies of a table that had been compiled from the completed partnership mapping forms that has been completed to date (copy attached). This mapped partners' current activity against the Community Strategy targets relevant to the ELS partnership. Work will continue on the mapping exercise, as not all agencies had yet been able to return their forms. However, the main findings so far were that:

There is a significant range of provision against Objective B, which relates to skills development activity, however, this tends to be concentrated around level 1 and 2 provision, with some at level 3. This therefore leaves a potential gap around skills for life and pre-level 1 provision and a significant gap around higher-level skills at levels 4 and 5. There is NRF money available to look at starting to tackle this gap.

There appears to be a gap in provision against Objective D, which relates to the knowledge economy. This again relates to the provision higher-level skills and it was questioned whether the work of the LSC could fit into this.

Although currently it appears that there are very few agencies tackling enterprise and employment this was a reflection of the fact that information from GME and HBC's regeneration team was still to be included in the mapping.

The new objective E from the terms of reference was included and it was here that the partnership will need to ensure that there is no conflict between targets given the activities here look at income maximisation, not just through increasing economic activity, but also through maximising benefit take up. Agencies will therefore need to work closely together to ensure that the partnership's activity is heading in the same direction. It was noted that collaboration already takes place between the Welfare Rights team and JCP.

DB questioned where the LSC's development of an Adult plan fits into this. KM explained that it is likely that this will not be ready until 2007 and will then form the basis of the SSPs work around skills provision.

LD also distributed a table, which mapped current NRF funded provision against the ELS partnerships targets and the floor targets (copy attached). Although there were no projects that didn't the ELS targets, there was again less provision currently against skills for life, higher-level skills and the knowledge economy targets.

It was noted that although there were some projects that did not appear to directly relate to floor targets, they would have a contribution to ensuring employment rates increased and deprivation reduced in Halton.

4. Group Work Mapping

Partners divided into two groups to identify gaps, duplications, cross-cutting issues and activity as part of the mapping. The notes from this group work discussion are attached.

5. Neighbourhood Management

The group received a presentation on Neighbourhood Management from Mike Bellairs (information attached).

Questions and comments were invited and included:

Whether there was co-terminosity with other boundaries, for example the Children's centres boundaries. It was explained that it was the role of the Neighbourhood Management co-ordinator to look at this and ensured initiatives were aligned wherever possible.

MB explained that a mapping exercise is underway to identify groups within the NM areas and to identify resident's priorities and perceptions.

GM questioned how the Area Forums fit into the NM agenda. MB explained that whilst they are kept separate at the moment they would not work in isolation. However, there are issues in that the Area Forum areas do not always correspond to the NM areas. Council Members will form the link between the two.

It is intended that the NM boards when established will have a representative from each of the SSPs. The chair of the NM board is also the Chair of the Halton Strategic Partnership and the NM board report directly back to the LSP.

6. Next Steps

The next steps of the development of the SSP were discussed. It is intended that the mapping exercise will continue, with agencies who have not yet contributed and those identified through the group work being invited to do so.

When JCP are clearer about the Deprived Area Funding, this will need to be allocated.

Allocating the remaining NRF funding around the Enterprise, Employment, Workforce Development and Skills for Life strategies needs to happen as a matter of priority.

It was decided that proposals for projects for this funding need to be presented at the July 4th meeting of the partnership. Projects will need to link into one of the four strategies and the community strategy and be targeted at the deprived wards. A proforma will be developed to ensure similar information is available from all agencies in order to allow the partnership to make a decision. Agencies proposing projects should do so for a two-year basis (NRF finishes 1st April 2008)

Agencies are invited to submit proposals to Lisa Driscoll by 28th June 2006 to enable them to be emailed to the full partnership before the meeting on July 4th.

The key themes for an LAA will be discussed at the 4th July meeting and partners are therefore invited to consider these before the meeting in order for the partnership to make a co-ordinated response at the all partnership event on July 12th.