

Employment, Learning & Skills SSP

Minutes of Executive Group Meeting 15 May 2008

9.30 am, Jobcentre Plus, Widnes

Present:

Mark Wilson
Gary Collins
Siobhan Saunders
Gerry Fitzpatrick
Colin Billingsley
Andy Guile
Karen Johnson
Anne Daly
Eleanor Carter
Mark Grady

Organisation:

Jobcentre Plus
Economic Regeneration (HBC)
A/L & Skills Devt (HBC)
Enterprise & Employment (HBC)
Jobcentre Plus
Halton Voluntary Action
Connexions
Riverside College
External Funding (HBC)
HBC Policy & Partnership

1. Welcome/Apologies

- 1.1 Mark Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were provided by the Group.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from:
 - Kevin Mothersdale LSCGM
 - Simon Clough Children & Young People (HBC)
 - Marie Wright Councillor (HBC)
 - Diane Sproson Connexions

2. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising

- 2.1 The previous Minutes were reviewed and the Group agreed on their accuracy. There were no Matters arising from the minutes.

3. WNF Update

- 3.1 GC informed the Group that the SSP core funding over the next three years has been finalised. However, only the first year has been approved by the Council Executive Board as the accountable body. Future years will be the subject of further reports.
- 3.2 The 5 proformas which have been submitted for the commissioning round were outlined. A further ELS proforma has been submitted from Four Estates and Riverside Housing.
- 3.3 There has been a subsequent review of the commissioning process and as such there will be a series of workshops (dates to be agreed) to take this forward looking at the key transformational issues for the borough.
- 3.4 GC agreed to produce a series of maps of target LSOAs.

4 LAA Targets

4.1 GC outlined targets:

The target around NI 153 is expected to be with GONW shortly and is likely to be to reduce worklessness in the LSOAs by up to 3% over 3 years from the baseline. It was noted that this target will be more difficult to achieve as the worklessness rate in LSOAs has risen since 2005 to 31%.

173: This target is to prevent people falling from work onto IB. Currently there is no immediate requirement to set a target but this will happen in the future. Agreement still needs to be reached on how to measure this and NI171 below.

171: Boosting enterprise rates – the national indicator is being changed on how these are being set. Efforts are being made to try to move away from merely VAT registrations. Data will become available end November and the target will be set on receipt of this.

163: L2 – Government Office wants to set a target of 7.4 stretch, however LSC is looking for a target of 9.3 with +/- 3.1%. It is measured on the annual population survey. LSC and GONW to continue discussions.

116: This is really a CYP lead with ELS supporting. GONW advocating a year on year reduction of 1.1% reduction (based on last 3 years trend). However, the detailed of this is 1.7, 1.0 and 0.4% with the curve flattening out. As such a 1.1% trend is not acceptable and a pragmatic approach to reflect the flattening out needs to be taken.

4.2 GC provided an update on DAF and informed that the various project spends are now being received and advised that any amounts not spent will be carried over. The next few weeks will bring further clarity. There are issues where some projects have not commenced spending, some have overspent and some underspent. Once the full picture is available GC will provide the Group with an update paper “stocktake” on the exact final position so they can provide thoughts on what may need to be allocated for the current year. **A Performance Group meeting is to be arranged for the near future.**

5. LSC/JCP Contract Updates

- 5.1 GC informed that LSC wanted to update on contracts. Train to Gain have an analysis of providers and what is going to happen in Halton – this to be an agenda item for the next meeting.
- 5.2 CB informed of the DWP decision to move to award prime contractor for ESF. Halton has 25% of ringed contract value and 250k of delivery is for work in Halton or sub-contractors. Halton has decided to deliver via 2 other sub-contracted partners in Runcorn & Widnes and will be confirmed by JCP. **CB agreed to re-circulate the prospectus “Outreach Thru to Retention”.**
- 5.3 The LSC project involving Local Employment Partnership (LEP) has differential rates between Halton and the 5 other boroughs. GC has requested information from LSC on difference in unit costs.
- 5.4 JCP has met with Connexions Cheshire & Warrington. It is felt that there is a requirement to take stock and map the totality of all provision that is potentially going to start rolling

out. This will be much clearer in the next couple of weeks. MW stated that there is a real possibility of over-engagement and ESF contract side need to get together. He has given a steer to the provider that they will be expected to work with this Group.

6. HPIJ Pre-recruitment/Core Activity Update

6.1 CB informed that the Employment Group is meeting next week to finalise the terms of reference and partnership with a strong discussion about pre-recruitment partnership delivery. Staffing levels need to be confirmed with a pre-recruitment discussion paper. They will be looking to HPIJ and other means of heavier delivery and post employment support. There is a clear link to the pre-recruitment programme with 2 skills trainers, 3-4 on delivery and at least 1 based on employment support & management, although all recruitment is to be staggered. GC felt it important to clarify the role of the skills brokers and CB said they need to have a discussion next week with GF.

7. Timetable for LSC Lead Adult Plan

7.1 SS has emailed to the Group the Draft Adult Learning & Skills Framework for Halton. There is no further update at present.

8. LEP Development

8.1 CB informed the Group that this is effectively local jobs by local residents for local employers and provides extra support for a person moving into work and whilst in work. JCP are investing in bringing this up to speed and in contacting employers. The local labour market managers are speaking to them and building up a portfolio of local employers and the local demand side of labour/supply with the PAs looking at provision available and support through the journey. Priority is priority wards and SOAs.

8.2 CB to provide a copy of the paper “What is a LEP” and who are the employers.

The next phase is to move into the local labour market with advisors developing a portfolio of LEP customers within Halton.

8.3 GF and Jane Trevor are looking at an agreement within the existing work of HPIJ, as local employers have been identified to sign up to the partnership. LSC funding will be predicted around eligible employees and employers signed up to LEP. The target for Halton has not yet been established.

9. Sector Skills – Update and Next Steps

9.1 GC explained how the SSP was becoming more involved in sector work. Logistics well underway, science and technology next, but also need to look at construction and care sectors but there is a clear capacity issue. It was agreed that the Skills Group would look at this and report back. There is to be an 11 June Science meeting with LSC/Tim Leather

9.2 SS informed that a 3MG meeting was held on 23 April. The Investors' Handbook is being developed and the Skills offer will form a part of this. 50 Stobart driving jobs have been transferred from Carlisle to Halton. O'Connors will retain their autonomy in recruitment. MW informed that he would like to meet with Stobart as a partnership over pre-recruitment. **SS to arrange.**

10. Sub-Group Reports

10.1 It was suggested that PCDL and the draft employment strategy for people with disabilities be specific items on the next agenda

- 10.2 GF provided the Group with a handout “Enterprising halton 2007/08 MI Report” and informed that for the last 12 months there has been 70 progressed with a number of companies moving on to VAT registration levels and creation of an additional 34 extra jobs as extra staff have been taken on.
- 10.3 GC informed of the proposal to open a family learning centre in conjunction with Widnes Vikings. This will need to be mapped with other provision such as schools and Children’s Centres.
- 10.4 CB updated the group on developments within Cheshire to establish an Employment and Skills Board via CWEA. The Board had met once already and was private sector lead, with a support group containing Govt bodies taking forward certain actions. The Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Strategy was also setting up an Employment and Skills Board.
- It was important for Halton to ensure they were represented appropriately within any planning arrangements for these Boards and report back to the sub-group accordingly.

11. Date and Time of next meeting

- 11.1 Date: Thursday 17 July, 2008
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: HBC Conference Room
The Heath Business Park
Runcorn