

Swindon Employment and Skills Board (ESB)

10th September 2007, 14:45 16:30

John Moulton Hall (Penhill)

Minutes

Present

Sue Watkins (Learning Skills Council, LSC) (Chair)	SW
Andy Read (Learning Skills Council, LSC)	AR
Jill Annal (Jobcentre Plus, JCP)	JA
Bruce Clarke (SBC-Learning)	BC
David Evans (SBC-Economic Development)	DE
Peter Snowman (SBC-Economic Development)	PS
Ernesto Gomez (SBC-Economic Development)	EG

Apologies

Peter Beech-Allen (GWE/BL)
Peter Manley (SWRDA)
Sally Rackard (SWRDA)
John Davies (Thring Townsend and Chamber rep)

Notes and Review of last meeting (SW)

- The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true record and all actions were completed or covered as agenda items.
- EG reminded the attendants of the comments and feedbacks to the Skills and Employment report presented on 8th June.
- It was agreed that the Economic Inclusion project will be mainly based on the Exchange Project.
- SWRDA changes were noted.
- PS will represent SBC - Economic Development on this group instead of Dave Evans.

New ESB Structure (DE)

- He mentioned the structure of the Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership (See Appendix) and the ESB as part of this partnership. The ESB will be comprised of three subgroups:
 - ❖ **Employment Engagement:** Formed mainly by Colleges, Ubis, LSC, Chamber of Commerce, SBC (Economic Development) and Private sector.
 - ❖ **Economic Inclusion** Comprising of JCP, SBC (Econ Dev and Learning), SWRDA and LSC.
 - ❖ **LAA (Projects)** represented by LSC, JCP and SBC (Econ Dev)
- It is necessary to include some representatives from the private sector. The Chamber of Commerce might have a big role in this representation.

Action – DE to inform all partners including the colleges of the new structure.

Funding Opportunities (SW)

- ESF programme 2007 -2013 has a regional budget of £54M, excluding Cornwall, for NEET (12.8M), employability interventions (£40M) and community grants (£1.2M).
- There is a two stage e-tendering process, the first stage of which will be a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) followed by an Invitation to Tender (ITT). SBC has submitted a PQQ by Janet Dufield that will cover it for future rounds.
- Skills for Jobs Programme - March 2009 has a regional budget of £1.7M. The Skills for Jobs Programme addresses national skills and employment policies and the Leitch agenda by assisting people back to work and by making that employment sustainable. It includes skills coaching and a focus on people receiving benefits. JCP and LSC will work together in this initiative. This is already out for tender.
- ESF includes two priorities:
 - ❖ **Employment opportunities**
The objective of Priority 1 is to increase employment and to reduce unemployment and inactivity across the South West. It will help to tackle barriers to work faced by disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities and health conditions, lone parents and other disadvantaged parents, older workers, ethnic minorities, and people with no or low qualifications. It will also aim to reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training. All proposed actions will be subject to scrutiny to ensure eligibility for ESF support.
 - ❖ **Workforce development programmes.**
The objective of Priority 2 is to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce by: reducing the number of people without basic skills; increasing the number of people qualified to level 2 and, where justified, to level 3; reducing gender segregation in the workforce; and developing managers and workers in small

enterprises. There will be a particular focus on the low skilled. All proposed actions will be subject to scrutiny to ensure eligibility for ESF support

- BC pointed out that SBC is working with Gloucestershire in four projects: Parklife (Industrial states activity), Market Towns, neighbourhood jobs and city centre.
- JA added that JCP acts on behalf of DWP in the ESF programmes and has three objectives:
 - ❖ Engaging people in NRAs/deprived using LAA framework.
 - ❖ Supporting Children Centres

Swindon Exchange Economic Inclusion Project (SW)

- This project aims to increase the opportunities for local Swindon residents to be successful in obtaining jobs with the office, retail and catering occupiers that will eventually form The Exchange development in Swindon. BC was invited to lead this work and to attend the next meeting of the Exchange Partnership.
- JCP will do recruitment using one stop-shop in order to fill the vacancies.

SSEP Conference 14 November, Hayley Conference Centre (DE)

- The aim of the conference is to gain private business support in driving Swindon forward, by outlining mechanisms of participation, and showing companies the real benefits of being involved.

Action – EG will coordinate the inclusion of ESB on the conference stands.

LAA Updated and LAA II Priorities

- JA explained that its contractor is due to visit the libraries in order to assess the feasibility of rolling over the project on employment support in the most deprived NRA's.
- AR informed the group that 46 learners have achieved a qualification that contributes to the LAA stretch target. The target number to achieve for this year was 40; therefore this number has been exceeded by 6. There will also be a contribution to this total made by the mainstream FE funding, the level of this contribution will not be known until April 08.
BC asked if there was available information regarding costs and benefits and the unit cost in this contract.

Action – AR will bring further information regarding this initiative.

- DE is working through the Policy Task Group in order to establish the LAA II priorities and indicators.

Action – All will propose for next meeting priorities to be taken into account for the next LAA.

Using ICT for skills acquisition (EG)

- Connecting Swindon was presented as an initiative looking at supporting public policies especially those focused on social and economic inclusion and partnership activities such as the LAA. There is work to be done with different SBC entities. After these rounds it is expected that some skills and employment projects will be enhanced by the benefits of using digital technology.

Next meeting in late October/early November – date and venue tbc.