

# Capital Reward Grant Meeting PS4D

Held on Friday 15th January 2010, 2pm  
County Hall, Exeter

## Present:

Name	Organisation
Andrew Lightfoot (Chair)	Devon County Council
Craig Marshall	Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network
Daniel Bailyes	Devon Economic Partnership
Julia Foster	Devon County Council
Tony Skeel	Learning and Skills Council

## Apologies:

Name	Organisation
Trevor Day	PS4D Consultant
Sally Kittle	Job Centre Plus

### 1. Welcome

Andrew welcomed everyone and introduced the purpose of the meeting, which was to evaluate the eight expressions of interest received for the PS4D capital reward grant. Andrew acknowledged from the start that the applications received provided a good selection from which to work from.

Overall there will be in the region of £707k available for capital expenditure. Given the bids we have received collectively exceed this total we will naturally be unable to meet the requests of every interested party.

As of yet the money has not been signed off by government, but there is a hope that this will happen soon.

### 2. Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network: Centralising the Workings of Virtual Learning Environments

From the start it was declared that Craig was an interested party in this discussion.

This project would link the virtual learning environments of individual providers onto a central system. This would save each provider in the region of £1000 which would be ploughed back into provision. With these savings it is also hoped that other providers would participate with online services too.

The group agreed that the idea was simple and would be very effective, particularly as it benefits remote rural communities which are normally disadvantaged.

This project was therefore unanimously agreed and the full amount allocated of £9,985.

### 3. Bicton College: EARTH

This project aims to create a centre of regional excellence at Bicton for renewable technology education. It was argued that the proposal read well and that it addressed a key area for further development. In that sense, it was very positive and all agreed that it would be a good project. Moreover, it would provide a visible legacy for the Reward Grant money.

Weighed against this was the high proportion of available funds that this project was consume. Moreover, it argued that any funds allocated to Bicton ought to be ring fenced, because so much could be done with the money at the college.

There were also a number of other concerns. Most notably, the group wanted evidence provided of further partnership working and linkages into existing groups and agendas.

It was therefore decided that further information would be sought before a decision could be made.

#### **4. Community Council of Devon: Rural Community Skills Centres**

This project sought to develop facilities that would provide for skills needs in rural areas.

The work that would actually be carried out was not specified. There was also a risk of duplication.

However, it was suggested that the concept, rather than the specific proposal, be kept on the table, since the proposal was only an 'expression of interest'.

Before the idea could be taken further, more information would be needed from them addressing how well co-ordinated and integrated they are with others working to provide a similar service. This is a very local project too, and would not have a huge impact elsewhere. It was pointed out that CCD do good work and would like to create a network across the county. Their piecemeal approach was unavoidable.

It was decided that, having examined the remaining proposals, that this application be rejected. However, should proposals that are asked to provide further information when requested fail to do so, then this concept would be examined again.

#### **5. Devon Heartlands CDT: Okehampton Learning Resource Centre**

This proposal was opposed for a number of reasons. Firstly, it proposed a mere study into a scheme that has no prospect of further development. The library service is also not interested and the site itself is a very challenging one.

Moreover, linkages with the school were not strong enough and the Okment Centre would only be ten minutes away. The site itself is also very small. Providers in the area had not been in contact on this scheme.

Everyone agreed that this proposal would receive no capital funding.

#### **6. Petroc: Petroc Creative Arts Centre**

The development of more HE provision in North Devon presented a strong case and the thematic approach was a positive note in the bid. The job prospects were also appreciated.

There were a number of concerns raised. Most notably, how did this scheme fit into the bigger picture? The bid had not been discussed with the schools and concerns were raised that colleges were putting proposals together without discussion within local partnerships.

As with Bicton's bid, it was decided to await further information and assurances before a final decision could be made.

#### **7. South Devon College: Redevelopment of Pearl Assurance House in Newton Abbot**

This proposal raised concerns of duplication, for instance, the new skills centre in the town. The bid itself had a number of positives, but more information would be needed before a decision could be made.

#### **8. Torridge Training Services Ltd: Support Centre at Torridge**

The comments around the table were generally positive. The idea was considered both simple and effective and the sums requested were not huge in comparison with others.

Along with the bid from the Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network, this bid was accepted.

#### **9. Wings South West: An Extraordinary Opportunity**

It was agreed around the table that this bid represented a large long-term project – which was unusual given the small organisation charged with overseeing delivery. This was considered a concern.

Secondly, it was asked how the alternative curriculum proposed would fit in with Stepping Stones. There was not enough to base a decision on as yet. Moreover, the project had not been discussed at the North Devon partnership.

Thirdly, Bideford does not have hundreds of NEETs and therefore people would have to travel in from other areas. This would need a discussion with surrounding parties.

Concerns were also raised at the scale of funding needed. It was argued that the risk of failing to compile the budget that would be needed, along with the complexity of the proposal, would justify turning it down. However, it was pointed out that January would be a key month for bids, so it may be an idea to wait and see what happens.

Given the lack of sufficient details, the number of variables and the stretched nature of the Reward Grant, it was decided to turn the proposal down.

#### **10. Bicton, Petroc and South Devon College: Further Details on their Proposals**

Three bids were considered by the group to be strong contenders for funding. However, a number of further details and assurances would be needed first. It

was therefore decided to invite all parties to deliver a presentation each (lasting for 20 minutes) with 20 minutes reserved for questions and answers.

The main points for each to cover include:

1. The need to sell the scheme, providing visual aids for those assessing to picture the scale of the projects;
2. The need to provide evidence of partnership work beyond their own organisation. There needs to be real evidence of linkages e.g. with 14-19 groups;
3. Evidence of any match funding and financial viability;
4. Outcomes and Outputs. The need to demonstrate the benefits derived from the project;
5. An idea of the timescale involved would also be important, especially relating to the projects viability.

**Action (Andrew): Write a letter to Bicton, Petroc and South Devon College explaining the decision of the group and also outlining the points that will need to be covered in the presentation.**

Both Monday 8 February and Wednesday 10 February, from 10-12:30, were selected as possible dates.

**Action (Daniel): Arrange a preferred date with Bicton, Petroc and South Devon College along with a venue.**