

Productive Skills for Devon

Held on Friday 25th September 2009, 2pm
Okehampton Business Centre

Present:

Tim Jones (Chair)	DCBC	Andrew Lightfoot	DCC/Devon Economic Partnership
Philip Oldfield	Exeter City Council	Kate Foster	University of Exeter
Tony Skeel	LSC	Michael Cozens	South Hams District Council
Sally Kittle	Job Centre Plus	Julia Foster	DCC
John Davey	Connexions	Geoff Hallett	Devon Education Business Partnership
David Rowe	University of Plymouth	Lucy Gough	DCC
Ben Neild	SLIM	Charlotte Hanson	Community Council of Devon
Philip Done	NWDWDAG	Caroline Murphy	(Train to Gain) Business Link
John Willis	PS4D Consultant	Trevor Day	PS4D Consultant
Chris Lorimer	Exeter College	Margaret Davidson	Adult & Community Learning
Keri Denton	DCC	Anne Barnett	DCC
Ian Harper	DCBC	Jeremy Filmer-Bennett	DCBC
Debbie Passmore	Torbay & South Devon Employment & Skills Board		
Graham Morris	Plymouth Employment & Skills Board		

Apologies:

Rosie Bates	DCC	Andrew Ashley	Enterprise Plymouth
Liz Abell	Devon Renaissance	Craig Marshall	Training Provider Network
Karen Chapman	Job Centre Plus		

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began with a moments silence to mark the passing of Steve Smith, a long time member of the group, who died on 2nd September following a stroke.

Tim then welcomed the group and thanked Okehampton Business Centre for hosting and for providing lunch prior to the meeting. Introductions were given around the table.

Lucy, who has been doing the administration for the PS4D meetings since April, is moving on to a new placement as part of the graduate development scheme, at the end of September. Tim thanked her for all her work over the past 6 months.

2. Future Jobs Fund – next steps

Andrew circulated a briefing note to the group, which is attached with the minutes. The Future Jobs Fund is a government scheme to find short term jobs for long term (over 10 months) unemployed 18-24 year olds. Devon and Torbay's joint bid has been successful.

Steve Turner from DCC is leading this work. Hoping to have the first people in jobs by early November. Candidates will be sifted by Job Centre Plus. Support mechanisms for both employers and employees are currently being looked at. Good links have been made with a number of employers, but there need to be more. We seem to be ahead of the game, compared to other areas.

Sally reported that Job Centre Plus recently held a successful Future Jobs Fund Jobs Fair in Cornwall, and are planning to do something similar in Devon & Torbay.

Only people who have been in receipt of JSA benefits can be included, so time spent registered unemployed with Connexions doesn't count. There are also issues around young people that have been in temporary seasonal employment over the summer – they will not now be eligible.

There are a number of different pieces of work going on that need to be linked up, including the Future Jobs Fund and the drive for increased numbers of Apprenticeships. We need to ensure that we are preparing for after the recession.

Action: Tony Skeel to draft a paper to show potential linkages between areas of work.

Can we scale up Future Jobs Fund? Can the links made be used for future apprenticeships? There needs to be some sort of legacy after this programme has finished.

There is also the possibility of a mentoring programme for both employees and employers – there is a potentially good number of mentors available within Devon.

It was also suggested that case studies, featuring people that are participating in the scheme, are put together.

The steering group that put together the initial bid proposal will now continue to meet to oversee the project and look at how maximum benefits can be obtained, with possibly additional members to strengthen links with apprenticeships etc.

Action: A meeting of the group to be set up.

3. Learning Transformation Fund – Margaret Davidson & John Willis

Following John Willis' presentation at the last PS4D meeting, Devon Community Learning Partnership has been successful in their bid and has received £100,000 to support informal learning on a Devon wide basis. The aim is to encourage adults back into learning. They are hoping to run 250 short taster courses, delivered by community based organisations. They will be loosely themed around the Devon environment and green issues. The courses will not lead to qualifications, but will hopefully build confidence and encourage people to undertake further skills development. The money has to be spent by March 2010.

Part of the money will be spent on the development of a website, which will sit in the current suite of Devon websites, including Live Devon and Visit Devon, and be called Learn Devon. The idea is that this will be the gateway to information about learning across Devon. There needs to be recognition of work that is already going on across the county and the array of websites that currently exist. The idea is not to cut across these, but to provide a one stop site with links to other projects. Perhaps website development could be offered as one learning option?

As many community groups as possible need to be engaged. The Partnership have also been attempting to engage with the BBC, and link in to their National Learning Revolution Campaign which is being launched shortly.

There will be a launch event for this project on Thursday 8th October at Ockment Centre in Okehampton. Details are attached with the minutes.

The development of case studies, to track people's progress hopefully from these taster courses on to more formal learning, was suggested. There was also discussion around the role of training providers – could they be present at events?

Discussions are already underway within the Partnership about maintaining the networks established after the funding comes to an end in March 2010.

Action: If anyone has any further suggestions/links/marketing ideas, please send them through to either Margaret Davidson (margaret.davidson@devon.gov.uk) or John Willis (johnwillis@ukgateway.net)

4. Detailed Skills and Employment Analysis Research Proposal – Ben Neild

A copy of the proposal was circulated prior to the meeting.

This new proposal has come out of discussions following the presentation of the baseline performance report at the May PS4D meeting, around the need to tie in with the ESB geographies and the need for more analysis of the data.

The proposal therefore suggests that the next performance report be integrated with some additional work, including more detailed patterns of worklessness, looking at the data from past recessions to see how long it took to recover, looking at current recession data in more detail including advertised vacancies and types of jobs being sought.

There are options as to how data is presented. Could do one thematic report and then within that look at the different geographies, or could do a series of reports (one for each ESB area) and look at themes within them. They could then start the discussion at workshops or something similar to ensure that the data is properly analysed and digested.

Discussion amongst the group followed:

- Need to include information about ethnic minorities as we need to know how we can support specific groups.
- Is there any possibility for looking at a lower level than the ESB areas, for example at ward level?
- Plymouth ESB would be happy to buy in to a specific report on their area. They are also currently working with University of Plymouth to develop an econometric model to help them map the potential skills requirement in the future. They will be happy to share this once it is
- Would it be possible to look at sectors within the pan Devon approach? This work could then be used to challenge those sectors that the RDA have designated as priority sectors, if it shows that they are not the correct ones to be prioritised in Devon.
- Could we look at the impact of leaving migrant workers?
- How do we record the fact that many businesses in Devon are still operating with reduced days/hours? We could potentially do a telemarketing survey or just call around to various industry representatives to get an idea.
- There is a clear need to look at how the data is presented so that we can engage partners in discussion. There needs to be more activity around the reports. This will link to the participative elements of the Local Economic Assessment. Workshops could be done at a local/ESB level or for a wider group.
- Trade unions could also be a valuable source of information about changes in the labour market.
- The Regional Skills Strategy (RSS) will be produced next year. Devon has the opportunity to be ahead of the game and be able to proactively feed into the process. SLIM have already started the Skills Analysis for the RSS.
- There is scope for there to be a rolling programme of reports, with the core agreed as suggested, but other details could be added later. However, it would be useful to know costs if individual ESBs want to buy individual reports – for this Autumn and for 2010 also.

Action: Ben to work on the proposal, taking into account the discussion and come back with a timeline for the report and subsequent workshops.

5. PS4D Funding Plan

A pre meeting was held prior to this meeting to agree more detailed principles for allocating funding and the following was decided.

For revenue (£833,000)

- Research – up to £50,000 – this would not just be for SLIM, but also for Devon wide and local research.
- ESBs and WDGs – capacity support - £83,000
- Backing young Devon - £250,000 – this will be managed through the steering group set up to write the Future Jobs Fund proposal. A number of projects have been suggested that would fit under this theme.
- Sustaining Devon's skills – £150,000 - this is about taking a proactive approach to the worklessness agenda in terms of upskilling and reskilling of adults.
- Growing Productive skills - £200,000 – this is about enterprise and increasing productivity.
- New Skills 4 Devon - £100,000 – innovation and new ways of working.

The funding has been framed in this way to reflect the ideas that have been submitted to date.

Projects need to be framed against this criteria and a set template needs to be completed. This will be circulated shortly. Completed templates need to be submitted to Andrew Lightfoot by **Friday 23rd October**. They will then be reviewed by a small group comprising Andrew

Lightfoot, Tony Skeel, Trevor Day, Craig Marshall, Sally Kittle and Julia Foster and a decision will be made by early November.

The Future Jobs Fund Steering Group that will manage both the Future Jobs Fund and other projects under the Backing Young Devon theme will need to include representation from the 14-19 Strategic Partnership.

For capital (£833,000) – ideas also need to be collated. A template (to follow shortly) will need to be completed and submitted to Andrew Lightfoot by **Friday 20th November**. Feedback will be given by the next PS4D meeting on 26th November, with final decisions made by Christmas to allow 15 months for activity to take place before the spending deadline is reached in March 2011.

The 14-19 Strategic Partnership has capital money available for facilities development. There could potentially be opportunities for match funding – links need to be made.

Areas that need to be considered (most of which are included in the template itself) when submitting are:

- Marketing of project – ideally need a communications plan.
- Legacy
- Leverage
- Potential match funding
- Possibility of under spend

There will be a need for some light touch reporting – with the right questions being asked at the beginning, middle and end of projects.

6. Discussion around Green Skills/Jobs – Ben Neild

As part of the new ESF framework, there needs to be a statement about how the development of green skills/jobs would be supported. SLIM are currently undertaking some research in to the possibilities in the region on behalf of Government Office for the South West. A paper was circulated prior to the meeting.

A regional workshop is being held on 27th November where people will be encouraged to feed in information about current work, or possible opportunities for the future. However, it would be useful to start to find this out now.

Action: Ben to send out some prompt questions to the group. ALL to respond to Ben directly (B.Neild@exeter.ac.uk).

7. Updates from Local Employment and Skills Boards and Workforce Development Groups

Plymouth (Graham Morris)

- Future Jobs Fund currently taking up a large amount of time as work progresses on their bid.
- Currently looking at future skills supply. Previously demand has been led by learners rather than by employers.
- Working on a skills plan covering both talent retention and development of the current workforce.
- In terms of the low carbon agenda there are plans to hold a seminar and debate the skills required to exploit a low carbon economy.
- Also looking at higher skills development, knowledge transfer and raising business aspirations to provide world class customer service.

Torbay and South Devon (Debbie Passmore)

- A full update is attached with the minutes.
- The Board is currently advertising for a Chair – details are available at www.torbaydevelopmentagency.co.uk or on the DCBC website.

North West Devon Workforce Development Group (Philip Done)

- Draft terms of reference for the North Devon ESB are with the North Devon + Board.
- There is some discussion as to whether business advice and support should be an additional role of the ESB or if there should be an independent group.
- Workforce Development Group has been digesting Labour Market Intelligence from the Devon Renaissance Business Survey.
- Ongoing discussions around PS4D funding and the prospects for state funding of workforce development.

Exeter and Heart of Devon (Jeremy Filmer-Bennett)

- Structure is now sorted and the Board is private sector dominated.
- Looking at Exeter Growth Point – short, medium and long term needs.
- ESB will work strategically and will then commission the Workforce Development Group to deliver. One administrator will cover both groups. Siobhan Wright has resigned as administrator for the Workforce Development Group.
- Skills Shop – trialled at Flybe – will be taking this forward working with Connexions, Job Centre Plus and the colleges.
- Flybe Academy – also a very important development and not just for Flybe itself. ROK have been appointed as contractors.

8. Notes of meeting held on 17th July

Reminder that information will be required for the Equality Impact Needs Assessment.

One amendment received from Michael Cozens regarding the Devon & Torbay Post Office Task Force Partnership.

9. News Round Up

GH – response to a Times Education article on Diplomas to be circulated to the group.

GH – Employability launch on 6th November.

KF – a lot of new graduates came on to the job market in July. Exeter University will be hosting joint workshops with Job Centre Plus – these are open to any SW graduates. Plymouth University are also doing work to support graduates. Please put any graduates in touch with the relevant university if they require support.

DR – Learning Innovation Grant – there are 4/5 potential bids in Devon for this capital money for ICT developments.

DR – prospectus for E-Learning Content Creation out next week.

IH – DCBC awarded Leonardo partnership programme which involves businesses, training providers and local authorities working together.

SK – first EATS event held in Torbay – 1000 attendees with around 40 stalls. Want to hold another one and link to Future Jobs Fund.

JFB – Keynote speech for Primari day – over 120 businesses attending.

JFB – work has come out of the joint marine/renewables event.

GM – event held for 40 businesses to look at LEAN techniques and business efficiencies.

Another event to be held in January.

GM – New programme at University of Plymouth – drop in centre for graduates.

CH – CCD Conference on October 21st – see CCD website for further information.

CH – Rural Women Business Centre at Watermark Centre in Ivybridge – first in country.

CH – Devon Migrant Worker Task Group - £750,000 of funding to support community hubs and provide business support.

CH – CCD involved in pilots with Job Centre Plus to support gypsy traveller business support needs.

CM – In process on integrating business advisers and skills advisers.

CM – Emphasis currently on leadership and management training – there is money available.

CL – plenty of Apprenticeship funding.

CL – anyone interested in mentoring young people wishing to start a business please email chrislorimer@exe-coll.ac.uk

TJ – new Chair of Plymouth City Development Corporation is Gavin Carrier and new CEO of North Devon + is Steve Pitcher.

Date of next meeting – Thursday 26th November, 2pn, venue tbc