



Productive Skills for Devon

Wednesday 9th April 2008, 2pm Start, Ockment Centre, Okehampton

Present:

Tim Jones (Chair)	Andrew Lightfoot	Trevor Day
Tim Beavon	Philip Done	Alison Cox
Jeremy Filmer-Bennet	Steve Schlemmer	Karen Chapman
Liz Abel	Steve Smith	Leanne Crawford (Scribe)
Tracey Field	Kate Foster	

Apologies:

Lee Richardson	Lynne Del Greco	Richard Ball
Tony Skeel	Chris Jones	Philip Oldfield
John Davey	John Willis	Craig Marshall
Geoff Hallet	Anne Barnett	
Margaret Davidson	Charlotte Hanson	

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Introductions round the table were given.

2.0 SLIM/Step Ahead report (previously circulated).

Steve Smith summarised the main points of the Step Ahead Research interim report (see attached briefing paper).

Action: Rapid feedback on proposed indicators required by 18th April to Steve Smith

It was stated and agreed that indicators should be agreed and supporting evidence should be gathered to inform the LAA and PS4D future work.


Page 25, Section 5, of the report provided a framework of indicators and showed what measurements are required.

A number of discussion points on the report, and included:

- Worklessness needs to be addressed in terms of barriers as well as general access to employment
- There needs to be an agreement on the definitions of Leadership and Management
- Issues to be addressed by PS4D (a) analysing data availability to identify gaps; (b) unpicking of indicators, ensuring appropriate packaging and reflection on LAA to ensure flexibility for future indicators; (c) a baseline study is needed with an agreed starting date; (d) statistical analysis of indicators used, via a traffic light system; (e) ensuring each indicator has an associated data set
- How the report will relate to existing work and will lead interpretation of the reports content
- It was advised that data sets may not be available at the lower levels from some agencies, including Job Centre Plus
- The indicators and associated documents will need to be future proofed

Underpinning Issues discussion points

- It was stated that the indicators are largely result based with little



or no measurement of processes of delivery. It was agreed that this element could be explored further, although caution was advised on the difficulty of this

- It was suggested that there may be common steps in approaches but agreed that commonality is difficult to achieve due to regular changes in approach by each agency.

Areas for performance measurement discussion points


- It was suggested that literacy and numeracy should not be included under the L2&3 headings but included under a lower level qualification heading on a table of lower level skills
- It was suggested that 7 issues will be difficult in terms of measurement
- It was stated that there has been some European work on the definition of Leadership and Management skills, and it was suggested that Plymouth and Exeter Universities may be able to provide information on this

Action: Steve Schlemmer and Kate Foster to explore this further

- It was questioned whether the focus so far had been on what information is readily available and whether further work could be commissioned to further this knowledge
- It was agreed that the level of sub county monitoring needs to be ascertained to ensure relevance at the ground level
- It was agreed that there needs to be measures to compare local performance on a regional/national scale
- It was questioned whether indicators can be broken down further to present the real picture rather than overall statistics
- It was stated that there are some inaccuracies within the data table
- Issue of demographic's affect on current skills set needs further exploration
- The use of the word "worklessness" and its relevance was questioned, and whether this related more to quality of employment.
- It was agreed that it will be a huge task to convert indicators to data and that comparable data is needed
- It was suggested that 5 communities are chosen as a pilot to monitor performance, and to use these as a benchmark. It was agreed that a range of communities would be needed, rather than a focus on the worst performing areas

Reporting back discussion points

- It was suggested that if the indicators are being used to look at corrective or new actions, bi annual reporting will not be enough
- It was stated that every measure will require a target if the traffic light system is to be used and agreed that this will have budget implications
- It was agreed that the traditional stake holder group will need to be extended if work is to be demand led
- It was agreed that information will be made widely available and interactive where possible, i.e. online through the new DEP website www.devoneconomy.co.uk
- It was stated that SLIM are doing a lot of work regionally and that this information will also be readily available. It was suggested that PS4D look at themes rather than continual focus on same issues.



The Step Ahead report also provides pointers on the monitoring of the Economic Strategy and its five priorities.

- Need to consider other measures of productivity.

Next Steps

- It was agreed that pilot communities may be a useful exercise, although caution was advised. This will be fed back to SLIM for comment
- SLIM to be engaged to draw out agenda
- Ensure future proofing, as PS4D will be the skills element of the LAA
- Emphasise need for data that means something locally as well as globally
- It was agreed that there is an issue around report collation from a variety of organisations and that the key to this would be a data management system

It was stated that SLIM are currently contracted to undertake the monitoring of indicators, however this can be reviewed and broadened if necessary. This will be an ongoing relationship. Next steps here will be:

- Points raised will be fed back to Nigel and Andrew Dean by Steve Smith
- Agree whether to invite group to meet to ascertain data for indicators alongside discussion of Nigel and Andrew's own feedback
- The next PS4D meeting will then feed back key areas for action
- Monitoring – the monitoring group will meet and look at fitting the report into the Devon Economic Strategy

Action: Feedback required on report from those who sent apologies for this meeting

Action: Steve Smith to collate responses for SLIM

It was also agreed on the importance of using simple English in all communications.

3.0 Local Area Agreement: update and proposal for skills

A time scale for the LAA was given and confirmed that targets for outcomes should be agreed and submitted to GOWS by 28th April 2008, for signing off in June. It was confirmed that the skills indicator will focus on Level 3 attainment.

It was stated that the main task over the next two weeks will be to relate previous work on improvement into Level 3 attainment across Devon. The existing data and analysis trends will need to be looked at. The Government has yet to provide guidance on its interpretation of this indicator.

The LAA indicators have a number of stretch targets which will be signed off, however the supporting work behind these does not go to Government. It was agreed that LSC involvement gives credibility to the LAA indicator for skills.

Action: Volunteers for participation in further discussion on detail to contact Andrew

It was agreed that actions should focus on completion of Level 3



qualifications.

It was suggested and agreed that a letter should be written to DCC by the Chair on behalf of PS4D requesting that reward money of £2 million from the LPSA should be allocated to the PS4D for investment. It was agreed that this money has been achieved by full partnership working and should therefore not be invested by DCC exclusively.

Action: Letter to be drafted and forwarded to DCC

It was questioned whether the Level 3 targets of the LAA is out of alignment with the RDA targets which are Level 2. It was agreed that Leitch specified Level 3 and that this point should be raised to the RDA.

It was suggested and agreed that the LAA target will only be successful if businesses are fully engaged. It was reaffirmed that communication methods need to be looked at further.

4.0 Update on local initiatives

It was reported that North Devon, Teignmouth and Dawlish have taken forward a number of initiatives.

In North Devon Skills Starters has been generic in Torrridge due to funding constraints; however the future focus will be on tourism. A programme on graduate skills and benefit to smaller employers on the ground is starting. Ilfracombe is in its 3rd cycle for its Centre of Excellence for hospitality. There has been good feedback so far, and Care is now also offered through this partnership. It was stated that North Devon have had real problems in engaging with Devon's Social Services.

Action: provide a record on the outcome of the Dartmoor Prison project, as a good practice case study, along with examples from Devonport, Plymouth

Trevor Day gave an update on behalf of John Willis on English @ Work and the Functional Skills Task Group.

English @ work – there are plans for marketing campaigns to roll out across Devon. Plymouth and Torbay. Press releases have been supported by DVDs and leaflets, and these were also supplied to all providers. Devon Renaissance funding has been confirmed, with urban areas hopefully to be supported through ESF. Jeremy Filmer-Bennett has provided a lot of support in marketing. **Action: if anyone would like copies of promotional materials please contact John's office**


Functional Skills – the first meeting will be held on 1st May at 11am at Exeter College, finishing at 1pm. Larger providers will be represented, **any member of PS4D wishing to attend to contact John for further information**

It was stated that £30K had been allocated for Workforce Development Coordinators, who have been very successful, particularly in North Devon.

5.0 Budget Allocations

It was stated that there is a potential budget of £2 million with the reward money from LPSA, and there was an underspend of £20-30K for the group.

Action: Andrew to circulate note of spend to date



It was stated that there had been approaches by local initiatives for funding but time constraints has meant that these requested have not been processed. It was affirmed that funding would be available for measures to address the Level 3 target and not just local initiatives.

Action: Project proposals to be forwarded to Andrew by 18th April

The group were reminded that the DEP website, www.devoneconomy.co.uk, has a page for PS4D, including minutes and other information. It was confirmed that this can also be used for practical information for group members.

6.0 Report on Barnstaple event (4th April) and discussion of format for future events

Jeremy Filmer-Bennett reported a number of points on the Barnstaple event:

- The mix of presenters, both local and agencies was just right
- The only negative was less employers present than employees, however this was largely due to the preceding event at the venue
- There has been an invite to go back to 4 of the groups present, with a follow up mini event to be held in North Devon and hosted by FSB
- The format and speakers were fine
- Workforce development groups will be continued
- The next event will be piggybacking the Heart of Devon/Exeter event
- Presentations on the day will be available online
- Later feedback was very good
- It was reaffirmed that there needs to be greater employer input at future events. Okehampton was suggested as one location, dates and venues of remaining 3 events are to be confirmed
- Beyond budget the only constraint may be availability of speakers
- It was agreed that a short DVD for marketing and promotional activities would be very useful
- Recommendations to be formulated from lessons learned to formulate a future roll out programme

7.0 Update on infrastructure provision

It was stated that a number of gaps had been identified around the geographical area of Devon. Case studies are currently being looked at for Holsworthy, Caddesdown, and Honiton, for a report on employment spaces. As part of this, needs in other communities including Illfracombe, Exmouth, Newton Abbot and Okehampton, are being looked at as current priorities.

8.0 Notes of meeting held on 1st February 2008 and any other matters arising

An ESF tender meeting was held on 17th March, with respect to bids for Train to Gain money.

Action: Steve Smith to circulate document

9.0 News Round Up

- Devon Renaissance still has funding available for basic skills projects. They will be going to a Board Meeting on 1st May to commission work if no projects are forth coming. **Ideas to be forwarded to Liz Abell**

- Exeter University are holding an employer information day on 22nd May. ***Those interested in attending or who know someone who may be to contact Kate Foster***
- Exeter University are currently working with local businesses on developing graduate placements
- Devon & Cornwall Business Council are currently responding to the consultation on the movement of LSC funding to Local Authorities "Raising Expectations", which will be considered in light of the Boundary Commission. It was agreed that PS4D should also provide a response. ***Jeremy Filmer-Bennett to circulate the DCBC draft for comment***
- It was confirmed that North Devon Plus were officially formed on 1st April, and the funds have been rolled out for non Objective 2 areas for the Woman and Microenterprise (WAM) project.
- Business Support (SW) have confirmed that funding for the Start Up Business Programme in Torbay for NEETs has been secured and a similar project for Devonport is being looked at. It was also reported that the Exeter office is likely to be closed due to funding constraints
- The LSC are looking to focus on a large employer element for Train to Gain
- A number of new Diplomas have been approved, Trevor Day to circulate list
- The Watermark officially opened in Ivybridge on 14th April
- Talk training will be holding a consultation day on informal adult learning, details can be provided to those interested
- A new wallet size version of the Economic Strategy has now been produced
- Steve Smith reported that there are now 4 Community Grants schemes (successor to Global Grants), with one in Devon.
- Steve Smith reported that the voluntary sector lost out on recent tenders and will therefore require capacity building to reengage
- It was reported that there is a new board the Skills and Employment Commission, SLIM are doing some work around this. ***Steve Smith to circulate a brief on this towards to the end of the month.***

10 Dates of next meetings

Dates and venues confirmed.

19th June 2pm start, Meeting Room, Pynes Hill Court Exeter;

15th August 2pm start, Conference Room, Pynes Hill Court Exeter;

24th October 2pm start, Conference Room, Pynes Hill Court Exeter

Usual 1.30 lunch arrangements apply