

Productive Skills for Devon

Thursday 19th June, 2pm Start, Pynes Hill Court, Exeter

Present:

Tim Jones (Chair)	DCBC	Julie Lammin	DCC
Philip Oldfield	Exeter City Council	Craig Marshall	Training Provider Network
Joan Farleigh	Job Centre Plus	Liz Abell	Devon Renaissance
Tony Skeel	LSC	Jeremy Filmer-Bennet	DCBC
Philip Done	NWDWDAG	Rachel Butler	Job Centre Plus
Keri Denton	DCC	Trevor Day	
Andrew Lightfoot	DEP	John Willis	Skills for Life
Margaret Davidson	DCC	Geoff Hallet	Connexions
Leanne Crawford	DRN (Scribe)		

Apologies:

Chris Jones	Connexions	Kate Foster	University of Exeter
John Davey	Connexions	Karen Chapman	Job Centre Plus
Lynn Del Greco	SWRDA	Tracey Field	Enterprise Plymouth
Charlotte Hanson	CCD	Steve Smith	DCC
Anne Barnett	DCC	Mike Yeo	Torbay Council

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Introductions round the table were given.

2.0 Funding and Delivery Plan

Tony Skeel reported on the current funding situation, with funding available from a number of sources. An approach for utilising this funding was presented and a paper summarising the planning and processes in place was circulated. These included:

- work on LAA delivery and focus on economic indicators on productive skills, i.e. LAA 17
- Devon Economic Strategy priorities
- work through SLIM/Step Ahead and monitoring of activity in line with priorities


With this context, the PS4D Delivery Plan will be refreshed, based on the 7 themes agreed through the SLIM/Step Ahead work, and including the LAA target.

It was agreed that a complex funding regime should not be created and it will be local workforce development groups who will be expected to generate activity around priorities. It was suggested that funding should be used as pump priming to attract other larger sources of funding. It was agreed that the approach needs to be right before taking to workforce groups for consultation.

Several gaps in funding were identified, including:

- Some priority communities are much weaker than others in terms of infrastructure already in place
- Some employers or sectors are not yet ready to consider work placements
- Access gateways are needed to help people “over the first hurdle”
- Exeter Positive Steps fund was highlighted as a good example of providing a gateway function for engagement – it was suggested that this model should be rolled out

It was reported that the Global Grants ESF bids are now in and are expected to



be assessed week commencing 23rd June 2008. The 3 geographical groups have had a different approach to delivery and bids to various funding streams.

It was questioned how this will all link into general funding strategies and it was agreed that a good case needed to be made for business involvement, with the added value aspect still needing to be sold.

Liz Abell reported that Devon Renaissance has outputs to deliver but currently have no projects relating to these. They therefore wish to commission work from PS4D to meet these outputs:

- Number of people assisted to gain employment e.g cv writing
- Number of adults gaining basic skills
- Number of adults gaining L2 skills

There will be a maximum of £99K available to deliver all of these priorities, either as one project or funds split between 3 separate projects, with an additional target of £50K match funding. The projects will be restricted to rural Devon and must be compete by March 2009, although there may be flexibility around this if there are obvious benefits by this date. The application needs to be made by a named organisation but can be from a group of partners to work up and deliver the proposal.

The meeting thanked DR for the opportunity and agreed to the proposal and it was suggested that DCC lead with some private companies, Cosmic, North Devon Pathfinder, and Talk Training were suggested, along with Jobcentre Plus and DCBC. It was questioned whether this would overlap existing bids but stressed that this should be an added value project.

Action: Cosmic and Talk Training to be approached

Action: SLIM/Step Ahead work to be translated into a delivery plan. Tony Skeel to lead

Action: Andrew to produce budget of spend to the group at the next meeting


3.0 Local Area Agreement targets and actions

The LAA has been submitted to government and is awaiting sign off. The document is available on the Devon Strategic Partnership website <http://www.devonsp.org.uk/sustainablecommunitystrategy/outcomes/draftlaa08-11.html>

It was reported that Tony Skeel has negotiated a target of 4% improvement of L3 qualifications over 3 years in Devon, against a national target of 7% over 5 years 2007-2011.

It was confirmed that the reward money for the whole of the LAA will be £4 million and agreed that performance and achievement at all levels should be targeted, not just those relating to indicators and targets. It was agreed that PS4D should focus on the work by Step Ahead/SLIM which had a more concrete methodology.

It was confirmed that the DEP has taken responsibility for 22 outcomes falling under the 4th theme. Monitoring will be tied into the Devon Economic Strategy and work commissioned from SLIM around this.



Rachel Butler and Joan Farleigh reported that Job Centre Plus has increased the number of Partnership managers, with Torbay, North Devon and Exeter, Cornwall, and Plymouth having dedicated managers, allowing for greater support in these areas.

4.0 Employment and Skills Boards

A paper had previously been circulated on the context and way forward.

It was stated that no prescription has been given as yet and that there has been encouragement by government in the creation of skills boards.

A proposal has been made for Skills boards in Exeter and Heart of Devon, North Devon (with debate around North Devon+), and South Devon and Torbay with DCBC asked to attend. There has been some difficulty around whether Torbay wishes to have its own group. Plymouth has already launched a group.

It was stated that there was a view that PS4D should be an employment board. However it was agreed that PS4D should be a networking system not a skills board, and provide a strategic lead and interconnectivity where required to avoid replication. It was agreed that the private sector should be common to all boards, as should involvement of local workforce development groups. It was suggested that workforce development groups need an organisation they can go to with formulated ideas, e.g. DEP, to avoid the issue of sporadic business involvement.

Action: PS4D to provide an initial reference point to Torbay and EHOD, with an invitation to the next meeting to discuss

A letter was also distributed prior to the meeting on the work commissioned by the Regional Skills Partnership on what is expected at the regional level. The letter regarded overlap and travel to work demographic amongst other issues.

5.0 Employer Engagement Activities

- An event was held at Darts Farm during April 2008 with employers and connexions advisors providing information to schools on basic skills
- A series of events will be held entitled "demystifying diplomas", which will be jargon free. These will attempt to find a balance of creative energy input from employers
- It was stated that PS4D need to engage with the developing 14-19 agenda
- The latest PS4D roadshow was held at the Exeter Chamber with a revised approach from the previous event held in North Devon. The response was excellent with 120 businesses present. The next event will be in South Devon at the First Friday event at South Devon College. Further events are planned for EHOD and Mid Devon, along with an extra North Devon event under the new format. A report will be presented to PS4D on completion of all the events
- Skills analysis – an EU funded scheme for finding out the hidden competencies of the workforce. A computer based system was developed as part of this, aimed at employers and employees to match skills with jobs. This has been trialled by BT, amongst others, and they have now commissioned this work nationally. The facility was originally aimed at SME's but found to be inappropriate. It will be offered to community companies when funding becomes available

6.0 Learning Disability Week

A paper was circulated prior to the meeting.

It was confirmed that learning disabilities formed one of the targets for the worklessness indicators in the LAA

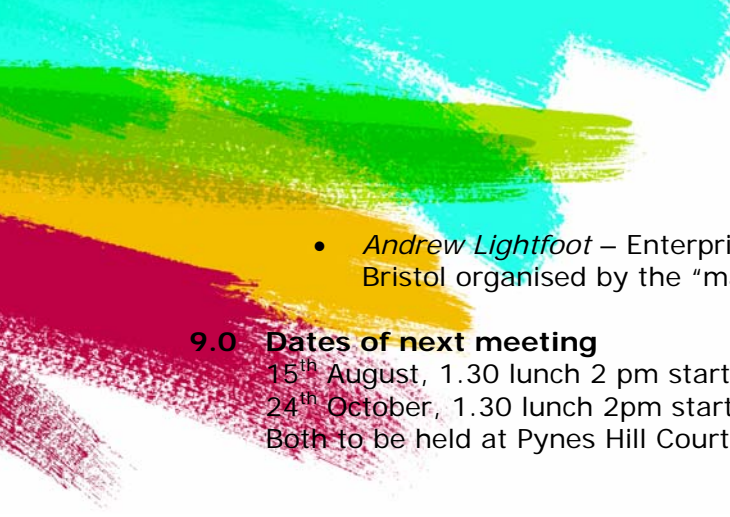
7.0 Notes Meeting 9th April 2008

All agreed

It was reported that Steve Smith had not been able to complete the action points stated due to a leave of absence. The Partnership extended their good wishes to Steve.

8.0 News Round Up

- *Tony Skeel* – a government white paper has been issued on the future of the LSC, which will close in 2 years. Tony will keep the group up to date but there has been no further information at this point
- *John Willis* – English @ work – although engagement with employers has been good, none have signed up to this scheme since the start of the financial year. John is able to supply further information to those who may be interested, **suggestions for companies needed**. Functional Skills – the group has met since the last PS4D and is drafting a strategy, however this has proved difficult due to the number of providers involved etc. Functional skills incorporates all basic skills for adults, 14-19 etc, and needs to be embedded into all other work ongoing. Train to Gain will be able to work on all levels from September 2008.
- *Liz Abell* – reiterated that Devon Renaissance is one of the funders for the English @ work project and is concerned over the lack of take up, especially as it is the first PS4D branded project. She reiterated that specific leads are needed
- *Geoff Hallet* – the Gateway 2 results for diplomas has been published and a leaflet supplied to providers. Safeguarding regulations on CRB checks – a statement from John Edmunds has been released as a press release from Chamber clearly stating the policy surrounding work experience.
- *Keri Denton* – Skills for Life negotiation for contract is under way and a manager will be recruited. DCC will be partners in the North Devon College engagement for L2&3 and there will be a small budget available for work on employer engagement around this. A food and drink animation event for ICT promotion has been held with others to follow. Renewable Energy – an analysis is underway for supply and demand for skills and PS4D has a role in influencing sector councils. Finally, the Devon Tourism Skills Network position will be replaced (Rosie Bates role) and DCC will deliver on behalf of the DMO.
- *Craig Marshall* – crisis in delivery – transport issues due to rising price of fuel. A Network Virtual Learning Environment will be launched in July to counter this. Also a new Train to Gain initiative has been launched in the South West based on employer engagement and skills take up through a media campaign
- *Liz Abell* - £330K worth of funding will be committed on 10 July by DR. There are 2 projects of interest – RE4D extension and apprenticeships (with the LSC) development of demand. RDPE bids – 4 have been submitted for Devon, each with a skills element
- *Jeremy Filmer-Bennett* – The Train to Gain campaign has been tested on the DCBC focus group. This service is offered to all partners
- *Margaret Davidson* – DCC adult and community learning are looking at building a virtual learning environment to reach rural communities; and there is a desire to increase capacity of the team

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- *Andrew Lightfoot* – Enterprise week – an event is being held during July in Bristol organised by the “mark your mark” campaign.

9.0 Dates of next meeting

15th August, 1.30 lunch 2 pm start

24th October, 1.30 lunch 2pm start

Both to be held at Pynes Hill Court, Exeter