

PS4D meeting on 24th October 2008 at Pynes Hill Court

Present

Tim Jones	Keri Denton
Andrew Lightfoot	Kate Foster
Steve Smith	Chris Lorimer
Andrew Ashley	Brian Vines, ND College
Janet Sinclair	Craig Marshall
David Rowe	Tim Beavan
Philip Done	James Sandy (Make your mark)
Tony Skeel	Liz Abell
Leanne Crawford	

1. Welcome given and introductions around the table.
2. Make Your Mark presentation by James Sandy. www.makeyourmark.org.uk. Background to Make Your Mark given – UK enterprise campaign, backed by BERR, to drive economic prosperity and social cohesion.
Objectives
 - increase entrepreneurship
 - increase experience and capability
 - creation and growth

Adds value through contacts, insight (i.e. experience), and products. Also development of local response and connection to national players. Currently developing Enterprising Places Network. There are also school and youth based challenges and activities. MYM has joined up with 76 other countries to look at international global issues.

Since 2004 there have been 10k events and 1.5 million attendances. In 2007, 5270 events of ½ million attendance.

Needed to adapt to government refocus and working with regional bodies and local authorities. NWRDA has very good enterprise strategy – case study. Looking to establish a base in every region.

Creating Enterprising Places – campaign report to be launched in November – link can be distributed. This has five main priorities, and the approach can be tailored to produce local or themed outcomes.

MYM has put together a number of engagement models for local authorities. MYM is a communications campaign therefore does not have a delivery arm.

Feedback on existing activities, approach, opportunities and next steps requested.

Fundamental issue – hot and cold spots and how to deal with on a regional level. Enterprising places network will be a useful initiative especially to share good practice – Andrew Ashley to represent Plymouth on network therefore could feedback

to PS4D. Making whole of Devon an enterprising place could be difficult due to historical issues.

Some rural case studies have been included in report, these could provide good examples for Devon, e.g. development of incubator space etc. MYM looking for a variety of case studies to reflect a number of circumstances.

North Devon College interested in exploring development of innovation and incubation space.

Risk that MYM is another approach in an existing number of approaches, including links to regional strategy. MYM is about challenging culture, and helping to access enterprise e.g. schools, clubs, etc.

MYM has a number of ambassadors, including young entrepreneurs. MYM's strength is backing from both Government and major businesses. Links with Devon Business Partnerships.

Action: Andrew Ashley to provide link and feedback on Enterprising Places Network.

3. Electronic Learning Platforms: David Rowe – presentation.
Example of a learning platform was displayed on powerpoint – one animation could save 3 hours of tutor time.

Overview of RSC South West given, alongside JISC National Services. There are a number of advisors covering the whole skills spectrum. As well as technology, RSC also provide information and support, alongside e-learning initiatives, with increasing involvement with delivery.

Platforms include blackboard (commercial system) not interactive; Moodle open source software that can host interactive packages; Virtual desk – interface into learning platform.

Good example <http://thetrainingprovidercollege.com> – 22 providers all linked to one site.

Contact: David Rowe – davidrowe@rsc-south-west.ac.uk
Plymouth help desk 01752 233899

Aim of linking with economically unviable areas e.g. rural businesses, hard to engage groups etc. Agreed that this type of elearning will work with blending, but also need to consider sectors who traditionally don't engage with ICT e.g. food and drink. Suppliers and customers increasingly expect more sophisticated contact.

What areas yet to be explored for elearning? Feedback to David Rowe. Look at potential rural pilot project? (RSC not a delivery mechanism).

Action: Liz to maintain link and look at potential projects through LAGs. Presentation to be put on website.

4. Challenges for FE Sector

Not just college footprint, concept is about adult delivery.

Andrew Lightfoot gave brief background – paper circulated a good summary – to be recirculated, apologies for wrong paper given.

Over 4 years of PS4D have tiptoed around colleges but need a more direct engagement.

Colleges - issues – employer engagement and support; employers keen to access funding and generic skills. Exeter successful in engaging with large companies but not SMEs. Brokerage can be difficult. Opportunities for qualification changes through Sector Skills Council engagement; difficulties around government focus and priorities. Working with sector skills board in Exeter.

ND – overview of PS4D required; confusion over employer engagement and brokerage duplication; funding – train2gain more flexible but fee's income has been raised. Impending demise of LSC and changes in 14-19 delivery. Funding methodology has become increasingly mixed.

Link to local business – ND proactive with train2gain moving across sectors. Money in brokerage facility has been taken away from delivery and engagement with learners.

Rural numbers of students – apprenticeship numbers taken hit recently; in terms of train2gain numbers are more positive. Self financing training is doing well (Exeter). North Devon – self financing in part due to government bureaucracy. Partnership elements work extremely well.

Where strong – Workforce Development group in North Devon very strong, looking at similar approach for EHOD and Torbay, although EHOD looks at wider range of activities. Need data in terms of postcode of learning rather than providers etc. Need to understand and work with partners and have a greater understanding around Devon's picture – Devon is providing majority of train2gain figures for SW. Excellent growth in adult apprenticeships and delivery 4% above national figure.

Poor performing areas: Retail
Leisure
ICT
Health and social care

Benefits have to be highlighted to micro businesses to get buy in, with delivery pitched to show immediate benefit to business. Initial engagement the main hurdle.

Research into successful areas and raw data needed asap, with possible analysis by Devon Renaissance.

Devon falling down on number of employers assessing training needs and hard to fill vacancies – pooling of resources to address these? This will also help with SMEs engagement.

Devon Renaissance Business survey is currently underway – Liz will keep group informed. Results available early 2009. Devon Renaissance evaluating projects undertaken to produce themed good and bad practice initiatives. Devon Renaissance will be able to track trends in business development and activity undertaken.

Difficult to quantify usefulness of training – often falls to anecdotal statements due to lack of national statistics.

Training provision needs to be made easier for those who would be interested in training.

Jobcentre Plus could have role in penetrating micro business. JC+ do not collect data on training and business development.

Continuation funding major issue, always has to be a new idea or project. Work around building capacity at baseline of businesses.

Continue to work together and communicate – what's been successful and what techniques have worked.

Action: Ask workforce development groups to consider in more detail and feed back.

5. PS4D Delivery Plan

Discussed previously, slim report now available with monitoring arrangement. Agreed on 7 themes, with eye on Level 3.

Funding – between LSC, County Council and DR, £535k available to spend now; catalyst was LPSA reward money with bulk of £2.3m secured – make case for reinvestment into skills; process regional funding allocation where government wants guidance on infrastructure investments including skills; ESF opportunities to bid into commissioned programmes around migrant workers, older workers and social enterprise.

Funding – budget allocations sheet circulated inc £250k. Activities and ideas highlighted (to March 2010).

LAA budget alignment – some activities will contribute directly to targets supporting LAA.

About working with existing groups and making linkages into projects. Seeking to strike a balance between sector support pan-Devon and geographic schemes through workforce development groups.

Next round funding – funding mixture is right but concern over BSSP, level of enterprise support on ground. Need more resource for business engagements, also evolution funding for projects. LAGs all have skills priorities – could match and co-ordinate projects through these. Liz offered to act as point of contact between LAGs and PS4D.

DCC match funding for LAGs will be for strategic projects.

Number of skills elements in DES that do not easily find funding e.g. social enterprise. LPSA monies may be used for this but case needs to be put forward – will be split between capital and revenue. Case to be put forward by 11th November. Also regional funding allocation by this date. Identify gaps.

RSC innovation funding targeted at widening scope of providers.

Scope for inviting ICT into what PS4D trying to achieve. DCC to announce supplier for WAN, linked in with ICT strategy. Also championing of strategy.

Tony and Andrew thanked for work achieved so far, particularly in terms of LABGI.

Action: Thoughts to Andrew over next week.

News:

Craig – provide provider engagement this week.

John Willis – note on functional skills event on 10th Nov – SP details to be circulated.

Dartington – credit crunch debate 31st Oct at 7pm – Andrew can arrange tickets.

Government announced BSSP of products yesterday.

First quarterly economy bulletin on Devon Economy website.

Meeting date to be arranged.