

**North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership**

**Economic & Learning Partnership**

**Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010**

**Attendance**

Alex Anderson, Economic Development Manager, Economic Development (**Chair**), North Ayrshire Council  
Isobel Kelly, Operational Manager, Money Matters, Social Services, North Ayrshire Council  
Stephen McLaughlin, Manager, Volunteer Centre  
Hugh McGee, Cunninghame Housing Association  
Mary Docherty, Head of Service, Education and Skills, North Ayrshire Council  
Joy Love, Partnership & Stakeholder Manager, Scottish Enterprise  
Councillor John Bell, North Ayrshire Council  
John McKnight, Manager, Community Development, Education and Skills, North Ayrshire Council  
Craig Crosthwaite, CVSna

Also in attendance

Andy Lee, Labour Market Initiative Co-ordinator, Economic Development  
Morna Rae, Community Planning Officer (Chief Executive's), North Ayrshire Council  
Lesley Jeffery, Community Planning Assistant (Chief Executive's), North Ayrshire Council  
Carol Malcolm, Scottish Enterprise

**Apologies**

Irene Gott, Head of Workforce Futures  
Jim Burns, External Relations Manager  
Brian Cameron, Manager for Ayrshire, Skills Development Scotland  
Marlene McMillan, Lead Public Health Practitioner, NHS Ayrshire and Arran  
Cindy Robb, Director of Business and Customer Relations, James Watt College  
Annique Armstrong, Regional Director, Visit Scotland  
Angus O'Henley, Economic Development Officer, Economic Development

**1. Welcome**

Alex welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. He reminded the group that the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> August had been cancelled due to the number of apologies received.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

**2.1 Matters Arising**

**Nuclear Decommissioning Agency – Hunterston**

Alex provided an update on the NDA bid since the last meeting. The consultant, Hall Aitken have now concluded their part and a list of projects from the Workshop which was held in the Three Towns are being considered jointly by NAC and Magnox under the following headings for submission by end December:

- attractiveness of the area
- staff potential / relocation (the majority of workers are from the three towns area)
- Supply chain (there are over 200 contractors currently involved in the site)

Alex added that whilst this is not a CPP issue he will keep the group informed of progress.

**Action: Alex Anderson**

### **Third Sector Interface**

The Third Sector interface needs to be in place by March 2011. Stephen McLaughlin (VCNA) provided the group with an update on progress. He stated that they are now working on the fine details of the negotiation and are meeting with Alastair Osborne, Policy Officer (Chief Executive's Dept) and Councillor Margaret McDougall (Chair, CPP Board) on Friday and also attending the CPP Board on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> September and that an announcement would be expected in the next two weeks. Craig Crosthwaite agreed.

### **3. Scottish Enterprise Inward Investment – Carol Malcolm**

Carol Malcolm was introduced to the group. Carol is an Inward Investment Specialist with Scottish Enterprise. She explained that she works with Scottish Development International to bring inward investment into the area although in the current climate this is very difficult and most of their current work is on expansion of current companies and safeguarding current jobs. They have worked with a number of local companies including Chemring, Ardagh Glass, Dawn Meats, Beechams and Barony Universal who have had Scottish Enterprise assistance to expand or safeguard jobs in North Ayrshire. The department is split into different sectors and she gave a few examples of these (Energy, Life Sciences, Food and Drink, Construction, Forestry) adding that marketing campaigns are run linked to these sectors.

Carol suggested that we use the Scottish Enterprise Extranet and Joy agreed to forward details to Alex Anderson.

**Action: Joy Love**

She further explained how her department works when an investor approaches Scottish Enterprise for assistance. She said that they first look at what is available using the Scottish Property Network and suggested that we ensure that all available land and property is on this site. They actively promote the central belt due to its good road, sea and air links as well as the pool of skilled workers and university graduates which are available.

Councillor Bell said that given what Carol had said he could not understand why North Ayrshire would not be first choice and if it was not then we need to find out why and how we go about getting North Ayrshire to the top of the search list.

Hugh McGee also said that councils were no longer in a position to build speculatively to attract new business to the area. Andy said that we could utilise JESSICA funding for this however Carol added that it was mostly land and not facilities inward investors were seeking.

It was also thought that North Ayrshire perhaps did not fit well into any of the sectors but Carol said that we are considered a life science and chemical centre but that companies do not have to fit into the sector.

Alex thanked Carol for the information and the group agreed the following:

- That Joy would email details of the Extranet to Alex
- That Carol arrange for Alex to meet Scottish Development International person to discuss North Ayrshire further and what we can do to make ourselves more attractive to inward investment. In addition, Alex would like to discuss previous failed bids although he added that there is often no real reason why one area is chosen over another.
- That a profile with fact sheets are assembled which will form a North Ayrshire proposition and include information on the main towns, skills available, tax incentives, average wages and physical availability of land. Carol agreed to forward full list of headings to Alex.
- That we carry out a skills audit concentrating on renewables although it was noted that other areas are further ahead in this field than we are.

**Action: Joy Love / Alex Anderson / Carol Malcolm**

#### **4. Employability Programme**

Andy presented his report. North Ayrshire Employability Continuum is a 3-year programme funded through Fairer North Ayrshire and European Social Fund. The programme was due to end in July 10 but a successful bid was made to extend the programme until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. The results which have been achieved across the programme are excellent, with over 1200 clients supported into employment, which given the current recession is exceptional. The only exception to the overachievement of targets of the number of participants from ethnic minorities although, this is due to the initial target being set too high.

The group is disappointed that the Future Jobs Fund Initiative is ending, with the Coalition Government withdrawing the programme. The group feel that this initiative has been very positive and encouraged a large number of organisations to provide training and placement opportunities. The group expressed a desire to sustain the momentum that this initiative had provided.

Hugh McGee suggested that we target European funding to enable us to continue a version of this programme and the group agreed that the More Choices More Chances client group needed resources to encourage 18-25s into work so we do not have another generation with a culture of worklessness.

Andy then provided an update on the Programme Review. The programme had originally been written when the economic situation was very different and it is necessary to take stock of the range of project offered and assess whether they were still fit for purpose. The positive aspects of the review are that the European programme has been redesigned to reflect the strategic approach that has shaped the North Ayrshire Employability Continuum. This is good news for North Ayrshire as it support the approach that targets those furthest away from employment through a series of linked support projects into sustainable employment. The new document,

Priority 5 has a strategic skills pipeline with five priorities which North Ayrshire can easily meet.

The 13 Community Planning partnerships from the most deprived areas in lowland Scotland, will become strategic delivery organisations along with SDS, FE Sector and the National Voluntary Sector. All organisations will be required to submit bids to the Scottish Government for approval and to prove that strategic linkages are in place. .

### **Strategic Skills Pipeline**

Allan McGregor (a director with SDS and a leading light on employability) has been commissioned to look at what we are delivering in order to shape the final bid submitted on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, and Andy added that Allan may contact members of this group for further information.

The Strategic Skills pipeline has 5 discreet stages, these are:

#### Stage 1:

This covers NEET as we still need to target the MCMC group. Financial Inclusion could also form part of Stage 1.

#### Stage 2:

This relates to more tailored activities like the Job Access programme, Working for Families, Lookahead and the volunteering programme.

#### Stage 3:

This links into SDS's focus who are bidding for an apprenticeship / training for work programme. European monies have helped SDS respond to our local need and not to national need. Andy added that colleges have also agreed to deliver courses based on local need and not on what places they can fill.

Isobel added that she has noted a trend in retail to employ staff who are over 50 and under 25 and on small hour contracts. Those over 50 would not be concerned about training but these contracts mean that young people cannot take a second job or commit themselves to undertaking further qualifications. She asked if we could approach the colleges, with the support of employers, to provide a day release course on improving retail skills which would enable the young people to seek promotion or travel further to work for better positions.

#### Stage 4:

Employer Support, Engagement and Job Matching. A Transitional Employment Programme which better reflects our experience over the last few years.

The Vineburgh Community Benefit Programme was successful but the initial trainees have been kept on and there are therefore no further places available. Two places have been included in the ice rink project and Community Benefit clauses is now a council wide strategy and all projects should include these clauses and will improve the opportunities of the MCMC group.

The Housing trainee scheme run by Cunninghame Housing Association offers high level skills (Level 3) and has been very successful.

#### Stage 5:

In work / Aftercare and Skills Development. This is about sustaining people in employment.

The initial North Ayrshire declaration of interest largely follows the current programme and may alter as the review is undertaken. Andy is also seeking new ideas and suggestions and will forward a standard proforma to the group to complete.

**Action: Andy Lee**

Andy reiterated that the timetable for submission is challenging in that an initial bid is required by 24<sup>th</sup> September however the full bid does not need to be submitted until 30<sup>th</sup> November. Although this is a three-year programme, funding is only available at the moment, through Fairer North Ayrshire, for one year.

There is also an issue with the Third Sector supporting Employability bids as SCO have changed to a national third sector bid which may result in duplication and does not fit with our local delivery strategy.

## **5. CPP Updates**

### **SOA Quarter 1**

Morna presented her report and stated that there are no issues in the report but that the format of it will be adjusted in the future. This was the first time the Covalent reporting had been used and it is hoped that Q2 report will be more meaningful.

### **CP Week Report**

Morna distributed copies of the report to the group for information. She said that it is hoped that next year's event would tie in with events already taking place with partners and that partners should inform Morna of any events they are planning.

**Action: ALL**

## **6. Partner Updates**

### **a. Education and Skills**

Mary Docherty stated that her next report would be more detailed but wished to note the following:

- 5-14 performance had improved across four of the six measures;
- S4 attainment in English and Maths (5 or more at Level 3) had exceeded the national average and although this is the lowest qualification there are now more of our young people leaving school having achieved qualifications;
- the level of those achieving five or more Highers is equivalent to our comparable authorities;
- Attendance is improving and exclusions are reducing;
- The 2009/10 leaver destination survey has shown there is an increase in the number of young people staying in education.

### **b. Visit Scotland**

This is for information as Annique Armstrong was unable to attend the meeting.

### **c. Scottish Enterprise**

Joy Love had to leave the meeting early, but it is noted that it is intended to progress Hunterston as a site for renewables.

**d. James Watt College**

This is for information only as Cindy Robb did not attend the meeting.

**e. Financial Inclusion**

Isobel Kelly reported that the work on co-ordinating financial inclusion has been completed; RBS are also supporting community finance initiatives and have already met with Ist Alliance.

Isobel added that the Scottish Government have consulted on the policy and development of Financial Capability which recognises the need for a more co-ordinated policy and suggests a key role for CPPs. This is preventative support and has the potential to help people take up and sustain employment.

Another programme, Money Made Clear, also helps people become more financially capable and could form part of employability programmes as people need assistance when leaving benefits.

**f. Skills Development Scotland**

This is for information as Brian Cameron was unable to attend the meeting.

**7. AOCB**

**Community Learning and Development**

John McKnight apologised for the lack of attendance at the last few meetings and agreed to provide an update for the next meeting.

**Action: John McKnight**

**DWP**

It was agreed we need to get an update from DWP about what is going to happen in March 2011. Isabel added that she is very concerned about the impact of welfare reforms as there will be a loss of income in Employability programmes and the Housing Benefit reduction will impact on arrears. These issues could lead to an increase in money leading which will impact on the whole community.

Isobel agreed to Craig Crosthwaite's suggestion that she produce a briefing on the implications of welfare reform.

**Action: Isabel Kelly**

**8. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at 10am. No apologies were submitted in advance.