



North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership
Economic & Learning Partnership
Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 7 November 2011



Attendance

Carol Kirk, Corporate Director (Education and Skills), **(Chair)** North Ayrshire Council;
Andy Lee, Labour Market Co-ordinator, Economic Development, North Ayrshire Council;
Angus O' Henley, Economic Development Officer, Economic Development, North Ayrshire Council;
Stephen McLaughlin, Chief Executive, The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT);
Brian Cameron, Area Manager, Skills Development Scotland;
Isobel Kelly, Operational Manager, Money Matters, Social Services, North Ayrshire Council;
Jim Burns, External Relations Manager, Job Centre Plus;
Colin McKee, Community Regeneration Unit Manager, Cunninghame Housing Association;
Irene Sinclair, Public Health Practitioner NHS Ayrshire and Arran;
Margaret Watt, James Watt College

Also in Attendance

Sandra Bale, Policy and Performance Officer, Morna Rae, Community Planning Officer, Paul Shiach, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's), North Ayrshire Council (minute)
Nicholas Young, William Burke and Michele Kennedy, Working Links Scotland.

Apologies

Mary Docherty Head of Service (Education and Skills, North Ayrshire Council
Tony Gurney, Councillor, North Ayrshire Council
Alex Anderson, Economic Development Manager
Annique Armstrong, Regional Director, Visit Scotland
Jim Nichols Arran Community and Voluntary Services

1. Welcome

Carol Kirk welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that following the resignation of Lesley Jeffrey, new clerking arrangements were in place, with Committee Services.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The previous minute was accepted.

2a Matters Arising

- 6 Employability Update – Jim Burns Jobcentre Plus, advised that a report would be presented to the next meeting. He indicated that there were a number of work clubs throughout Ayrshire, and it was hoped to commence work clubs for the 18-25 year old age group. Carol Kirk indicated that this would be progressed through Education and Skills Youth Team.
- 7 Modern Apprentice Places – Brian Cameron indicated that no employers had yet contacted him with regard to employing modern apprentices.
- 11 Social Economic Partnership – Andy Lee, Labour Market Co-ordinator, Economic Development, advised that a meeting of the Social Economic Group, a sub-group of the Economic and Learning Partnership had now taken place.

3. Working Links Presentation

Nicholas Young, accompanied by William Burke and Michele Kennedy, all representing Working Links Scotland introduced a presentation on the Welfare to Work activities. He indicated that since 2000, Working Links had supported 230,000 people into work, including over 20,000 in Scotland. The presentation covered the activities of Working Links, advising on the following aspects: -

- Working Links is the first public/private/voluntary organisation in Britain;
- The organisation delivers work programmes in 3 CPA areas, Scotland, Wales and South West England;
- The financial model and how it works;
- The customer journey, and
- Self-perception action plans.

After the presentation there was some discussion and the following was highlighted:

- Links to health at pre-employment and general health issues;
- Availability of information specific to North Ayrshire;
- The current embargo on sharing information on work programmes due to differing timeframes for starting programmes;
- The politicised nature of work programmes, and
- The requirement to include non-ESF providers in programmes.

4 Proposed dates for 2012

The following dates were agreed for meetings of the North Ayrshire Economic and Learning Partnership for 2012: -
9 January, 20 February, 2 April, 14 May, 25 June, 27 August, 8 October and 19 November.

5. Update: Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy

It was agreed that this item be continued to the next meeting

6. Update: Employability

Angus O' Henley, Economic Development advised that in terms of North Ayrshire Employability activity for Quarter 2, July to September 2011, 809 beneficiaries registered, of which 310 went into work and 23 into education/training.

He advised that since its commencement in April 2011, the new programme had delivered well in relation to targets set. The programme was making a significant contribution to jobs and training locally and was working with local businesses to ensure the services were suitable to their

needs. The programme had also contributed to the SOA's "work and training" outcomes and the North Ayrshire Economic Development and Regeneration strategy.

7. Update: Jobcentre Plus

Jim Burns, Jobcentre Plus advised as follows: -

- Job Centre Plus was currently recruiting 40 staff to expand Care at Home services. Applicants were undertaking PVG registration.
- Sainsbury's have submitted 196 job offers, the vast majority of which had been offered to people living within 10 miles of the store.
- Work was on –going with Dundonald Care Services and 10 job offers had been made.
- The need for more call centre training had been identified.
- Asda in Ardrossan opened a work club in October, with 20 referrals made to date.

Jim Burns

8. Welfare Reform

Isobel Kelly, Money Matters, distributed information outlining the impact of welfare reform and the Welfare Reform Bill. The Bill introduces a wide range of reforms aimed at simplifying the benefits and tax credit systems fairer by:

- Creating the right incentives to get more people into work by ensuring work always pays;
- Protecting the most vulnerable in our society, and
- Delivering fairness to those claiming benefit and to the taxpayer.

She outlined the main elements of the Bill and highlighted the following important dates and issues: -

- 7 October 2011 – Government announcement of an additional £300 million for childcare under Universal Credit on top of the £2 billion spent under the current system;
- 14 October 2011 – Government announced assistance with eligible mortgage interest will continue to be provided to homeowners as part of the housing cost element of Universal Credit;
- 17 October 2011 – A new report "Young People and Benefits" indicated that the number of young people claiming jobseeker's allowance (JSA) in Scotland rose by 79% over the three years to August 2010.
- 18 October 2011 – Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2011 is 5.2% which will be used for the annual uprating of benefits in April 2012
- 28 October 2011 – End of the Scottish Government Consultation on devolution of discretionary payments under the Social Fund, and
- November 2011 –0 Some amendments to the Housing Benefit shared accommodation rate rules for single people aged 25 to 34 to exclude some vulnerable groups.

Social Fund Consultation

Isobel Kelly advised that North Ayrshire Council had responded to the Scottish Government's Consultation on plans to replace the social fund with a benefit administered by local authorities.

The response highlighted requirements for the new scheme at national level to reduce the cost of introducing the scheme, and ensure a consistent approach across the country. The requirements were listed as follows: -

- Defined national eligibility criteria;
- A new national or local grant application form, and

- The procurement of a national or local IT system to record and control the expenditure will need to be undertaken and fully tested.

Local requirements identified were: -

- A mechanism for making a grant payment or the payment of goods;
- Working arrangements with the supplier of goods established;
- Staff resources to be identified possibly through a recruitment process;
- Staff training on the new procedures and new system, and
- A communication strategy to inform the public of the scheme.

The response commented on the lack of statistical analysis of the number and type of social fund applications being made by North Ayrshire residents, and highlighted that the proposal to have a fully operational grant system in place by 1 April 2013 across Scotland at the same time as other welfare reforms was particularly ambitious.

9. SOA Action Plan 2011-12 – Quarter 2 Reports

Quarter 2 Indicator Report.

Morna Rae, Community Planning Officer submitted the SOA Action Plan for 2011-12 Quarter 2 Indicators, covering the period to 30 September 2011. She advised that prior to 2011-12 the SOA contained annual indicators only. The Action Plan Quarterly indicators allowed better monitoring of progress over the course of the year towards achieving the stated outcomes. Appendix 1 to the report detailed quarterly indicators relevant to the Tackling Worklessness priority. Indicator 2a1, "Percentage of working age population in employment" was significantly adrift of target. The remaining indicators were on target.

Quarter 2 Actions Report

Morna Rae presented the SOA Quarter 2 Actions report advising that the Action Plan was monitored quarterly through the Covalent monitoring system. The report covered the period to September 2011. Appendix 1 to the report detailed progress against all the planned actions and sub-actions under the Tackling Worklessness priority and highlighted the following as being adrift of target: -

- 2.0 – Implement the Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy for North Ayrshire
- 2.1 – Establish governance arrangements
- 2.3 – Produce one-year action plan, and
- 7.2 – Develop a strategy for schools to support the delivery of vocational and alternative provision within the roll-out of Curriculum for Excellence that takes account of the local labour market.

In relation to action point 4.5 – "Evaluate current Employability Pipeline in relation to services provided by Work Programme Providers", Andy Lee advised that difficulties were being experienced in this regard.

CPP Staff Changes

. Morna Rae, advised that Lesley Jeffrey had taken a new post elsewhere. She further advised that the vacant post would not be filled, however Committee Services would clerk future CPP meetings.

10. Partner Reports

a. Money Matters

This report is submitted for information

b. Cunninghame Housing Association

This report is submitted for information
c. Education and Skills
this report is submitted for information.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on 9 January 2012 at 10am in Committee Room 2.

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