



Notes of the Meeting of the Skills and Employment Sub-Group held on Friday 14th January 2011 at Bromley College at 12.30pm.

Present: Simon Norton - Chairman, (Orpington College), Lynn Barratt (LBB 14-19), Cllr Julian Benington, Margaret Carr (Renewal and Recreation), Rob Cundy (Federation of Small Businesses), Louisa Allen (Bromley Field Studies), Jean Norton (LBB 14-19/Bromley Education Business Partnership), Sam Parrett (Bromley College), and Michael Wheeler (BAEC).

In attendance: Nichola Beeston (Minutes Clerk)

- 1. Apologies:** Marc Hume (LBB Renewal and Recreation)

Not in attendance: Mandi Grice (Job Centre Plus), Eithne Rynne (Community Links Bromley), Chris Sprules (Skills and Funding Agency). Clerk to check future attendance.

ACTION: NB

- 2. Notes of the last meeting held on 1st October 2010/ Matters Arising**

Page 2, item 3 – the Clerk confirmed that she had contacted Denise Mantell.

Page 2/3, item 4/5 – Clerk to contact Mandi Grice (JCP)

ACTION: NB

Page 3, item 6 – Lifelong Learning: MW to circulate report.

ACTION: MW

Page 3, item 7 - It was noted that MW had reported back to the Economic Partnership in November.

Discussion took place on how this Group inter-relates with the Economic Partnership. Cllr Benington reported that the Local Strategic Partnership had been abolished however, the Economic Partnership continues. There are two other sub-groups: the Business Competitive and Inward Investment Sub-Group and one other comprising of chairs of local town centre business groups, which have now been absorbed into the Economic Partnership. It was felt that the Skills and Employment Group is more specialised and should probably continue in its own right. It was proposed by SN that this Group remains as it is and will report into the Economic Partnership, via the Chair, whilst it has a role to play, but its status will remain under review. Agreed by all.

Clerk to ensure that SN is on the Economic Partnership circulation list.

ACTION: NB

Page 4, item 8 – it was reported that the Princes Trust Scheme had not gone ahead due to cost versus outcomes. SP reported that this is the Mayor's nominated

charity and Bromley College is currently planning to run some volunteer programmes at present.

3. Current Skills and Employment Issues

RC reported that local businesses are still struggling and there is a lot of uncertainty. Also the National Insurance increase due in April 2011 has been a major detraction to recruitment. There are job opportunities available but competition is high.

Although unemployment has climbed nationally, it was noted that unemployment rates in Bromley are relatively low – 2.6%. LA reported that she has access to the statistics and will ensure that the Clerk is added to the circulation list so that they can be circulated to the Group. **ACTION: LA**

It was reported that 280 new businesses started up in Bromley in November 2010, which appears an encouraging number. LA to provide this information to the Clerk for circulation. **ACTION: LA**

SN highlighted the fact that there is a need for this Group to identify the types of skills which employers are seeking, and the type of training they are willing to pay for. RC noted that training is not seen as a priority by many businesses in this economic environment. However, LA identified the need to predict the future types of businesses. The Sector Skills Councils provide this information and SP agreed to pass on a copy of the report on skills strategies and priorities for London, which is to be published shortly, by the London Skills and Employment Board. **ACTION: SP**

SN confirmed that Orpington and Bromley Colleges plan to merge with the consultation process commencing January/February 2011. This will enable the Colleges to respond in a more coherent way to the needs of local businesses and people. One area, being training in hospitality, was highlighted – there is no significant provision within Bromley at the moment. Cllr Benington confirmed that this is a prospective area of growth within the Borough with the possible future town centre development which includes hotels/restaurants and a cinema complex.

SP to send to the Clerk the Skills for Jobs Prediction covering the next 10 years for London, for circulation to the Group. **ACTION: SP**

Discussion took place on the provision of providing support to adults with the job-seeking process; writing a CV, interview skills, coping with change, franchises/self-employment opportunities and returning to work. It was agreed to defer this item for further discussion at the next meeting when it is hoped that a representative from JCP will be present, as they provide much of this training to their clients. **ACTION: NB**

4. Bromley Economic Framework – Strategic Priority 3

MW reported that LA, MC and himself had met previously and had reviewed the framework against priorities to make it more concise. This had been circulated

with the papers for the meeting. It was agreed that this document would be used as a checklist for the Group, to be reviewed and updated as a working document.

It was noted that Lewisham has now signed a lease in Cotmandene for the Credit Union. Also Age Concern's 50+ project is still being advertised; although there is no office space to run a job club, clients can still be referred to them.

LA reported that she would be attending a meeting on Tuesday on 'The Work Programme' which is to replace 'New Deal' Scheme. It will provide different forms of help to get people into work; it is a massive programme which is anticipated will commence June 2011. Tuesday's meeting will go through the framework and LA will circulate any information and will report back to the next meeting.

ACTION: LA/NB

5. PIE Project

MC reported that 75 people on Income Support/Incapacity Benefit had been placed in employment, against a target of 100.

6. Any Other Business

Cllr Benington reported that the Newshopper plans to publish a 12 page business supplement; 50% editorial and 50% advertising. There will be the possibility of providing copy and colleges advertising in same.

It was reported that all secondary schools within the Borough have applied to become academies and some secondary schools are also linking with primary schools as feeder schools.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 1st April 2011, 12.30 – 2.30pm at Bromley Adult Education College, the Widmore Centre.