

Action for Wiltshire Programme Board

11th February 2011, 10:30-12.00



Meeting Notes

Attended:

Andrew Kerr (Chair) (AK)	Wiltshire Council
Cllr Jane Scott (JS)	Wiltshire Council
Steve Stone (SS)	Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership
Philippa Read (PR)	Community First
Mike Williams (MW)	Wessex Chambers of Commerce
Rosemary Macdonald (RM)	Resilient Communities Partnership
Jackie Tuckett (JT)	Jobcentre Plus
Alistair Cunningham (AC)	Wiltshire Council, Economy & Enterprise
Haylea Fryer (HF)	Wiltshire Council, Economy & Enterprise
Niki Lewis (NL)	Wiltshire Council, Voluntary & Community
Matthew Croston (MC)	Wiltshire Council, Secretariat

Apologies:

Rt. Ven John Wraw	Wiltshire Assembly
Glen Leat	Jobcentre Plus

2. Notes from last meeting (5th November 2010) and Matters Arising

HF commented on the actions agreed at the previous meeting informing the Board that an Action For Wiltshire report will be provided to the WSEP Board as a full submission document. HF also tabled an updated Action For Wiltshire schematic, which included further details on the Help and Advice for Individuals workstream.

3. Economic Update – key developments

JT provided a Jobcentre Plus update stating that there has been a slight decline in unemployment in December; however youth and over 50's unemployment remains high. She also informed the Board that year on year unemployment in Wiltshire has been falling.

JS expressed concern at youth unemployment levels and stated that the downscaling of the Connexions service and the conclusion of the Future Jobs Fund may create an unemployment void for young people.

JT informed the Board that specialist 18-24 advisors will be available through Jobcentre Plus offering individual advice to unemployed young people.

JS suggested that a sub group should be organised to help mitigate the youth unemployment issue. AC stated that he will speak with Carolyn Godfrey regarding unemployment in the 16-21 age group.

RM stated that the Community Foundation could possibly provide funding to assist with mitigating youth unemployment. JT and RM agreed to meet to discuss this proposal.

ACTION AC to meet with Carolyn Godfrey to discuss youth unemployment.

ACTION JT&RM to meet to discuss Community Foundation Funding.

4. Local Enterprise Partnership Update and the Future of Business Support

AC circulated a draft LEP proposal for Wiltshire. He informed the Board that a Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire LEP will now not go ahead and instead a submission will be proposed for a Wiltshire only LEP. He stated that the Wiltshire LEP will focus on three core priority programme areas geared to support growth and the creation of private sector jobs. These areas are – Focus, Invest and Work.

Focus will identify key priorities for Wiltshire and focus resources so that the LEP is seen to be delivering benefits to businesses, residents and the economy. Invest will encourage inward and indigenous investment in businesses, and Work will strengthen the provision of a workforce that has the necessary skills to meet future demand and address unemployment.

AC also stated that the proposal will establish a core regional delivery area and will have wider alliances with LEP's that border Wiltshire so that economic synergies can be explored and developed. He added that the initiatives and projects detailed within the Action for Wiltshire Programme will help drive the key priorities of the LEP.

SS suggested working with non-border LEPs as well to learn from one another and gain examples of best practice. He also enquired as to what proposal Gloucestershire were submitting. AC replied that Gloucestershire like Wiltshire will also be submitting their own bid, and he also informed the Board that he would like 15 to 18 of Wiltshire's largest businesses to sign up to the Wiltshire LEP proposal. JS added that land based industries will also need to be involved in signing up to the LEP.

JS commented on potential LEP relationship difficulties with Swindon as both regions may be competing against one another for businesses and investment.

AC informed the Board that he has met with WACC to discuss the business and peer support programme and how it can be delivered effectively. MW stated that WACC have a network of 17 Chambers of Commerce who are prepared to provide a business support function. MW also stated that he is confident that the business support programme can be delivered this year.

HF referred the Board to the circulated Business Link update and commented on service provision through to November 2011. She commented on the number of trained business advisors who will be available following the cessation of Business Link services and that they should be engaged to discuss their areas of expertise.

RM suggested that the Fredericks Foundation should be linked into business advice discussions. HF agreed and added that it would be advantageous to link the Employment and Skills strategy to the LEP proposal.

AC discussed the different relationships that exist within the Action For Wiltshire Programme and suggested mapping them in a similar format. He agreed to discuss this at the next Action For Wiltshire Programme Working Group Meeting.

ACTION AC to discuss relationship mapping at the next Action For Wiltshire Working Group meeting.

5. Update on Implementation

AC discussed the PIDs/Project Briefs that had been circulated to Board members stating that comments were required on the layout and format not the content.

NL discussed the CAB Advice Line and informed the Board the calls in the third quarter of last year were up by 32% illustrating that more and more people are finding themselves in difficult circumstances and are therefore seeking advice. She commented on staff in the public sector facing redundancy and how they will need to know what services and employment opportunities are available to them. JT added that JCP will be assisting with delivering this.

JS commented on the CAB Advice Line and was concerned that it was not captured in the Action For Wiltshire Schematic. She proposed that a further box should be added to the Help and Advice for Individuals section covering maintaining the CAB Advice Line.

NL discussed how the Advice Line could continue for a further 6 months providing the underspend from Action For Wiltshire Phase 1 was carried forward to next financial year. She also informed the Board that the Government have decided to pull the Financial Inclusion Programme which will have an impact on CAB funding. She stated that she would bring further details of the Financial Inclusion Programme to the next meeting

AC discussed the Green Deal project brief that was circulated and stated how it linked to the Action For Wiltshire Initiative "Support business to reduce waste and develop new business opportunities within the low carbon and environmental sector". He commented on the need to ensure Wiltshire can deliver this initiative so that the residents can reap the benefits and he suggested that a project team should be set up to drive its delivery.

SS added that if the College needs to be engaged as part of the programme then he can assist with organising.

AK commented on the Green Deal project and stated that this issue should come up for discussion at the next Cabinet meeting.

AC informed the Board that when finalised, Project Briefs will cover a few pages only and PIDs will encompass additional information. AC stated that the Project

Briefs will form a programme GANT chart with a 'RAG' status traffic light system. AC added that project briefs will be circulated at the next Board meeting for approval. AK requested that this 'RAG' status should be added to the overall schematic diagram.

HF suggested that instead of having a project brief for each box identified in the schematic, boxes could be linked together as part of larger sub programme.

SS suggested that it would be useful if each project brief contained Council Officer/Project Manager contact details. This was agreed by the Board.

HF discussed the Wiltshire Work Grant and how JCP have provided £111,000 for its delivery.

JT gave information on the Work experience scheme being delivered by Jobcentre plus and requested £5,000 to support associated expenses for young people who are either living independently or living with parents in receipt of Income based benefits

SS enquired as to whether lessons that have been learnt from the Future Jobs Fund can be applied to the Work Experience Project. HF replied that the success of this project will be assisted by strategic job matching.

SS enquired as to whether the work experience group will receive mentoring and training prior to their placement. HF replied stating that Jobcentre Plus will provide a two day employment course to assist preparation.

JS enquired as to whether enough employers are signing up to the work experience programme. HF replied stating that they have been inundated with employers requesting to be part of the scheme.

MW enquired as to what age group the work Experience scheme applied to. JT replied stating that there will be 40 places available for people aged 18 plus who have been out of work for two years or more.

HF informed the Board that employers will receive a £1,000 golden handshake for taking on work experience staff permanently, and £25,000 has been suggested for this incentive.

AC discussed the £90,000 proposed budget carry forward from Action For Wiltshire Phase 1 and informed the Board that maintaining the CAB Advice Line for a further 6 months would cost £55,000.

MW expressed concern that redundancies at the CAB may impact on the service, resulting in difficulties managing demand.

AK discussed the continued support for the CAB Advice Line and stated that if the Board agree to support the Advice Line for a further 6 months then a sustainable model will need to be in place to plan for the longer term. The Board agreed to provide continued support for a further 6 months subject to the CAB working with them on the development of a sustainable business plan for the longer term.

ACTION all to feedback comments on layout/format of project briefs/PIDs.

ACTION Secretariat to add additional box to the schematic to include the CAB Advice Line.

ACTION NL to bring details of Financial Inclusion Programme to the next Action for Wiltshire Board meeting.

ACTION Secretariat to amend schematic to illustrate project and initiative 'RAG' status.

ACTION Secretariat to amend project briefs to include contact details.

6. A.O.B

AC reported to the Board that Action For Wiltshire has been provided with an agenda slot at the next Wiltshire Assembly meeting which will be taking place on the 9th June 2011.