

NOTES OF THE D2N2 PROVIDER ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT ROBINS WOOD HOUSE, NOTTINGHAM

Present:

Kerry Bentley	Derby Business College Limited
Neil Brown	EMFEC
Duncan Cale	Working Links
Paul Champion	Chesterfield College
Judith Dey	County and City Council Adult and Community Learning Services
Paul Eeles (Chair)	EMFEC
Alex Ford	Care Training East Midlands
Julie Harris	University of Derby
April Hayhurst	Derby College
Karen Hodgson	Nottinghamshire Training Network
Graham Howe	Vision West Nottinghamshire College
Mel Lenehan	WEA East Midlands
Steve Meadows	The Derbyshire Network
John Snow	Central College Nottingham
Bobby Upple	EMFEC
Katrina Woodward	D2N2 LEP

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Bradford (Bilborough College), Trevor Clay (Chesterfield College), Don Hayes (Enable) and Richard Horsley (D2N2 Board member)

2 NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The notes of the meeting held on 7 July 2014 were confirmed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Key ESF Programmes: Simon Feneley circulated documents for consultation but only received one response.

LEP are putting a draft plan together which will be out for consultation. Feedback is required.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Group **ACCEPTED** the Terms of Reference.

4 D2N2 PROVIDER CHARTER

Bobby Upple provided an update (*attached*).

Bobby Upple will be meeting with individual members of the Provider Advisory Board to develop the second stage of the project, a guide that collates effective provider practice in responding to Sector Skills Plans, employers (particularly SMEs), stakeholders, LMI, etc. The guide will be developed during October, for sign-off in November.

Noted: LEP do not want the Charter to be a checklist. Need to capture and articulate what the providers do. Need for employer-led provision – might be a perception of the LEP that this is missing.

The terminology of the Charter was discussed and it was agreed that it should read employer-led rather than employer ownership.

Noted: D2N2 is very supportive of the provider base. The Provider Charter is a way in which the LEP can demonstrate what the provider base is doing.

Sector Skills and Employment Action Plans: all will be available on the D2N2 website from the first week of October. This will enable providers to use as a resource with curriculum planning, etc.

The LEP would like to see providers' feedback re the Skills Action Plans. They will be put on the D2N2 website for anyone to access and will be constantly revisited and reshaped.

The economic growth is the ultimate aim of the D2N2 LEP and we have a collective way of demonstrating this.

Provider actions are what is being done now but how do we move the actions to employer ownership?

How do providers collectively demonstrate what they are doing and evidence how employers are satisfied with what they do?

What stops providers being as flexible as they want to be? The complex process of getting funding is a problem for employers eg Growth Acceleration Fund.

Commercial training: need to build up employer confidence – this is a challenge for the LEP. LEP want to promote more commercial training – stimulate growth – move from the reliance on funding.

Noted: Skills Competitions paint a simple picture for employers.

Employer ownership works very well with big employers but not SMEs. People making the decisions about training want their employees to be excellent.

Providers need to be open about sharing their best relationships with employers, etc.

What employers want to develop good staff is not always what providers can deliver because of processes, etc. Some employers do not want NVQs they want classroom taught training.

ACTION: Specific barriers to success to be gathered. Identify skills gaps and make sure products/services are aligned to this. Some of the LMI produced by the employers could be used.

ACTION: Following the one to one meetings, Bobby to circulate the collective comments.

5 **ESF PROGRAMMES AND PARTNERSHIP/COLLABORATION**

Simon Feneley provided an update.

D2N2 still have start date of July 2015. The SFA contracting is extremely bureaucratic. The LEP is realising the inflexibilities – this could damage and reputation of the LEP. Providers don't have relationships with the SFA anymore.

The LEP procurement process will be the same as the SFA. The LEP are still waiting, since June, for a list of those wishing to work with the LEP. The DWP have provided a list of those working on employment locally.

Noted: the SFA are represented on the Skills and Employment Commission and messages need to be fed back into the Skills and Employment Commission meetings in front of the employers.

ACTION: Provider Advisory Board to be kept up to date with progress in agreeing the Operational Programme and finalising LEP ESI Fund Strategies.

6 APPRENTICESHIP POLICY

Noted: The Apprenticeship Strategy is on the D2N2 website.

D2N2 is committed to rolling out the Apprenticeship hub model

How do we actually engage SMEs in the trailblazer programme? D2N2 have not received a response from BIS to this question.

Information from the data cube: 33,387 Apprenticeship starts in 2012-13 (20,000 from employers with 1 – 30 employees and 30,000 from employers with 1 – 100 employees). Note: The figures are for apprenticeships based on delivery locations in D2N2, so would pull in non-D2N2 postcode learners.

The Chair asked whether any providers were involved in trailblazers locally. Noted: Balfour Beatty is launching a trailblazer at Chesterfield College in November.

ACTION: Paul Champion to share information. LEPs to be involved in the launch.

Apprenticeship funding in the hands of employers so they can choose the most effective training for apprentices. Noted: not all employers want to be in the driving seat.

Trailblazer 3: a lot of work has been done around this which is likely to look more like how it is done in the future: clear assessment and delivery method.

The employer contribution is the real fundamental not employer involvement in the design of the apprenticeship. Will give larger employers what they want but for the vast majority of employers engaged in Apprenticeships, will they contribute?

Affordability and management of bureaucracy are the issues for SMEs. Also looking three years down the line is irrelevant – SMEs live in the here and now they need staff now.

It was **agreed** that all of this is indicative of bureaucracy gone mad. This should be about enabling young people to be engaged and making this easier.

Are trailblazers aligned to skills gaps/priorities? The cohesion is missing.

Concerned was expressed that trailblazers are employer led and providers are locked out. The LEPs are not connected to this either.

If you reduce the amount of apprenticeships how does this effect economic growth? Are apprenticeships linked to economic growth?

ACTION: questions to be taken to the Skills and Employment Commission

7 FUTURE POLICY ISSUES

- Apprenticeships – what we do going forward
- Skills Action Plans – main documents on the D2N2 website on 1 October. Are these a useful tool? What further information is needed?
- Apprenticeship Hub
- NAS contribution

Are organisations going to be tasked with encouraging employers? Measurable targets and transparent.

Noted: Nottingham hub – transparent. An employer hub too. Need to make sure everyone is aware of this and it is not duplicated.

It was suggested that the Nottingham Hub could be used to raise the profile of vacancies (use as a resource for unfilled vacancies).

ACTION: Michael Nicol, Head of Employer and Delivery Services (D2N2 and LLEP), SFA to be invited to the next meeting. Katrina Woodward to pre-empt Michael so he is able to respond effectively.

8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair thanked the group for their positive contribution.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

25 November 2014 2.00 pm at Robins Wood House

23 September 2014