

## Minute of the Employability Strategic Group meeting held on 24 January 2012 at Careers Scotland, Kirkwall

### 1. Welcome and apologies

#### Present:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Karen Johnstone   | Manager, Jobcentreplus ( <i>Chair</i> )                                    |
| Maggie Berston    | Human Resources, NHS Orkney  |
| Fraser Devine     | Voluntary Action Orkney  |
| Karen Foubister   | Skills Development Scotland  |
| Mary Anne Crook   | Public Health, NHS   |
| Tina Gilbey       | Lifeskills Centre  |
| Jeremy Richardson | Orkney Blide Trust   |
| Mike Drever       | Elected Member   |
| Amy Thomson       | Employability Orkney   |
| Hannah Thomson    | Community Planning Officer, Orkney Islands Council<br>( <i>Secretary</i> ) |

#### Apologies

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Bill Ross              | Orkney College  |
| Doreen Rendall         | Skills Development Scotland (represented by Karen Foubister)            |
| Joyce Slater           | Skills Development Scotland (represented by Karen Foubister)            |
| Gail Anderson          | Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Orkney (represented by Fraser Devine) |
| Chessa Llewellyn-White | Highlands and Islands Enterprise  |
| Derek Aiken            | Team Manger, All age disabilities, Orkney Health & Care                 |

#### In attendance

Alister Brown (*for item 4*) LEADER Development Fund

#### Not present

Robert Allan Learning and Development, NHS Orkney

### 2.0 Minutes of the last meeting (6 October 2011)

2.1 The minutes were accepted as accurate.

### 3.0 Action points from the last meeting not on the agenda

3.1 Regarding membership, Karen had made contact with Jackie Thomson to represent Economic Development, reply awaited. She has also contacted Bill Ross and Gail Anderson with regards to their membership, both of whom have now nominated other staff to attend; Linda Russell and Fraser Devine. Shirley Ward has yet to attend an ESG and Karen is still to contact her with regard to continued representation.

### 4.0 LEADER funding

4.1 Alister Brown (LEADER Development Officer) had been invited to the meeting to provide information on the funding with a possibility of applying for it as match funding for the Partnership Employment Worker post. The post would come to an end in either March or April 2012 dependant upon if funds are allowed to be carried over into the next financial year. Funding for 2012/13

has not been confirmed and the group were considering applying to LEADER for match funds.

- 4.2 Alister explained that he co-ordinates the fund through being employed by the Council. The Local Action Group (LAG) make the final decision about the success of applications.
- 4.3 There are two pots of money – the main LEADER fund which offers 50% match funding and the Convergence fund which offers a pound for pound match. Projects must be able to demonstrate innovation, amongst other criteria.
- 4.4 The next LAG meeting is 14 March and the deadline for the applications is 17 February.
- 4.5 Amy had completed an Initial Enquiry Form for Alister which he believed would be a project worthy of consideration by LAG. Alister noted that should the application be successful, the post would need to be re-advertised because it is a new project.
- 4.6 Whilst the future of the Flexible Support Fund was uncertain, a discussion was held about the Partnership making a contribution each towards the £15,000 required. It was agreed that Karen would investigate this further.

**Action: KJ**

## **5. Flexible Support Fund**

- 5.1 The Employability Strategic Group recruited Ian Robertson to the post of Employment Engagement Worker in December. This job was line managed by Amy Thomson at Employability Orkney and the postholder, Ian Robertson was based within the Job Centre Plus.
- 5.2 Since Ian had taken up post on 12 December, he had met with all partners and sent out an employer questionnaire to 119 businesses. So far there were 19 responses to this. He had also conducted 16 face to face meetings with employers and had secured two work placements. He had also handed out 12 Healthy Working Lives packs, which had resulted in a meeting with Mary Anne Crook being set up with an employer. Whilst the progress and the contact made so far were positive, job outcomes as opposed to work placements were required in order for the funding to be continued.
- 5.3 Ian needs eight more client referrals. The process for partners to follow is that the referral form is completed and sent to the Job Centre Plus. Ian then makes contact with the partner who had submitted the referral as well as the client. Together they decide if job coaching is required.
- 5.4 The Group spoke positively of Ian, that he had made a good impression with employers and had been receptive towards clients.
- 5.5 Karen confirmed that customers in receipt of Disability Living Allowance only would not qualify to be referred to this provision.

## **6. Council work placement contact**

- 6.1 The Council asked that any requests for work experience or work placements be directed to Human Resources rather than contact directly with a department or service. Human Resources would ensure that appropriate support is in place for the individual and the service.

## **7. Blide Hoose update**

- 7.1 Jeremy provided an update of the progress within the Blide Hoose and it was noted that there were 30 members at present and that they were looking for more referrals. A job club runs on a Thursday which has successfully managed to get three members back into work since it was started, and activity weeks have been taking place, focusing on a particular topic each week. Some clients are attending education classes and undertaking courses or qualifications such as ECDL. The horticultural area is growing and they hope to develop the vegetable box scheme in the future.

## **8. Short Life Working Group update**

- 8.1 Karen explained that the Employability Strategic Group had prepared a paper entitled 'Corporate, Community Planning Approach to Employability' which was endorsed by the OCPP Steering Group in February 2011. One of the recommendations of this paper was for a short life working group to be established to develop a strategy that would provide a range of employment supports and opportunities and reduce the need for and costs of social care.
- 8.2 The Group had found this to be a challenging task. There were issues around overlap and duplication of service provision as well as employability providers competing for funds.
- 8.3 The Group had developed a Strategy and model and were to report this to the Steering Group meeting on 28 February. The Employability Strategic Group would be kept informed of any developments.

## **9. School Leaver Destination Return**

- 9.1 The last academic year had a higher number of school leavers than the previous two years (191 in 2010/11 compared to 166 in 2009/10). There was also a decrease in the numbers entering a positive destination from 93.9% in 2009/10 to 89.3% in 2010/11.
- 9.2 There were ongoing issues around the Connect project being included as a positive destination which Skills Development Scotland hope to be able to resolve soon. Connect had nine clients and three more starting soon, therefore in terms of Orkney's young people population this was a fairly significant number to be considered as a negative destination. It was noted that Connect also have issues with it not being included as further education and this impacts on travel not being reimbursed. Connect had nine clients and three more starting soon, therefore in terms of Orkney's young people population this was a fairly significant number to be considered as a negative destination.
- 9.3 Karen provided Job Seekers Allowance claimant count figures. There were 80 18-24 year olds unemployed, whereas in Shetland this figure was 45. Of these young people, they were mainly under 13 weeks, there were 15 over six months and none over one year. All age groups numbers had increased since August and were higher than last year, in line with the national trend. Alistair Brown encouraged figures such as these to be included in the LEADER application to back up the need for the Employment Worker.
- 9.4 A query was raised regarding whether volunteering affected benefits. Fraser Devine confirmed that it should not. Fraser agreed to send Maggie information on volunteering

**10. Feedback from Partnership Liaison Group (PLG)**

- 10.1 Hannah updated the group on the last meeting of the PLG which was held on 7 December 2011. At this meeting, there was a vacancy for Chair and Vice Chair and Sally Inkster (Housing Forum) was voted in as Chair and Christina Bichan (Healthy Communities Group) was voted as Vice Chair.
- 10.2 The Partnership funding for purchasing a low carbon electric vehicle and associated charging posts was continued as a Council pilot, as recommended by the PLG. A protocol had also been developed which set out the process by which plans or strategies badged as Orkney Community Planning Partnership should go through to be endorsed.

**11. Agency updates**

- 11.1 Voluntary Action Orkney reported that three supported volunteers had moved into relief employment and two into College.
- 11.2 Tina Gilbey would welcome partners to refer clients along to Interview Techniques training on 21 February in the St Magnus Centre. The contact for this was [andee.fraser@lifeskillscentres](mailto:andee.fraser@lifeskillscentres)
- 11.3 Mary Anne Crook reported that there would be a Healthy Working Lives (HWL) awards ceremony. She encouraged partners to be involved with the HWL initiative.

**12. Any other business**

- 12.1 Mike Drever noted that from March he would no longer be a member of the group. Karen Johnstone thanked him for his time and contributions to the group and it was agreed to wait until after the elections to find a replacement Elected Member on the group.

**13. Date of next meeting**

- 13.1 To be held on 21 March at 2pm in the Job Centre Plus.