

Minutes of Meeting 6th December 2012

Cross Party Group on Skills

Date: 6th December 2012

Location: Holyrood, Committee Room 2

Present:

A4E	Vicky Wilson	Loch Lomond & Trossachs Community Partnership	Kate Sankey / Clara Walker
Barnardos	Simon Warr	NHS Education for Scotland	Simon Williams
British Retail Consortium	David Martin	Pearson	Baljinder Birdi
Chartered Banker Institute	Shona Matthews	SECTT	Anne Galbraith
CMI	Ian Andrew	Scottish Conservative Party	Gavin Brown MSP
Construction Skills Scotland	Graeme Ogilvy	Scottish Enterprise	Stephen Williamson
Economic Development Association [Scotland]	Anne Meikle	SHEEF	Rosemary Allford
Education Scotland	Ruth Ohldag	Scottish Labour Party	Margaret McCulloch MSP
ITC	Ian McCulloch	SQA	Joe Wilson
JHP Training	Jim Murphy	STUC / Close the Gap	Helen Martin
LifeSkills Centres	Gerry Croall	Scottish Training Federation	Colin Dalrymple
		The Open University	Úna Bartley / Pete Cannell

Apologies received:

Application Recruitment	Tracey Exton	NSCC & Independent Roof Training Association	John McKinney
Association of Accounting Technicians	Helen McGougan	OPITO	Gillian Black
Barnardos Scotland	Helen Brown	SCQF	Aileen Ponton
Bio Reliance	Louise Rice	SDS	Fiona Stewart
British Retail Consortium	Fiona Moriarty	Scottish Labour Party	John Park MSP
Chartered Banker Institute	Simon Thompson	Scottish Liberal Democrats	Liam McArthur MSP
COGENT Scotland	Paul Coffey	Scottish Whisky Association	Alison Galbraith / Julie Hesketh-Laird
Creative Scotland	Helena Ward	SEMTA	Brian Humphrey
Economic Development Association [Scotland]	Irene Bell	SQA	George Brown
Employment Enterprise	Jay Smith	SELECT	Newell McGuinness
Federation of Small Business Scotland	On behalf of FSB	Skills Development Scotland	Fiona Stewart
ICS Ltd	Joanne McManus	STUC	Sylvia O'Grady
Improve	Kelvin Thomson	Unite	Lindsey Millen
Investors in People	Judith Ackerman / Vicki McLean	Universities Scotland	Susannah Lane
Lifeskills	John Brown	University of Abertay	Prof. Stephen Olivier

Agenda Items:

1 Welcome:

- 1.1** Gavin Brown MSP the Co-Convenor [GB] welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened by thanking John Brown of Lifeskills for sponsoring the lunch. Unfortunately John was unwell and so Gavin wished him a speedy recovery and would reserve some time at the next meeting for John to say a few words about the work of Lifeskills.
- 1.2** GB then announced that John Park MSP was standing down from Parliament and therefore as Co-Convenor of the CPG. It was with deep regret the CPG was losing John who had started the CPG and he was going to be missed very much. The Members joined Gavin in conveying the very best to John for success in his future role.

2 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 2.1** The Minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 4th October 2012 were approved. Matters arising included:

- 2.1.1** Joint Meeting with the CPG for Colleges and Universities: a further joint meeting had not yet been agreed. This will be pursued in the New Year.

- 2.1.2** Discussion on Funding Issues: This was to be discussed under Item 4 of the Agenda.

3 Presentation - National Park Skills Partnership/Academy Proposal

- 3.1** GB welcomed Kate Sankey and Clara Walker of The Community Partnership Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and invited them to take the floor.
- 3.2** [Summary paper provided in Appendix 2]. Kate provided some background to the Partnership, reflecting on the presentation given by Ron Dalton in March 2010 and noting that this original project had been launched by John Park. This focused on the work to pilot Modern Apprenticeships within the National Park boundaries specific to the needs locally of the community, resident micro businesses, and young job seekers. This pilot was grassroot led and without this project 20 mircobusinesses would not have engaged with Modern Apprenticeships.

The construction sector had been the starting point for the original Partnership, however at the time of launching it was promised that, if successful, the initiative would look to support other sectors in the Park. In 2012 feasibility study was commissioned to look at other key sectors for the Park: Tourism, Land-Based Work and Local Food Production. A copy of this feasibility study is available should any member wish to receive it. The approach taken was evidence based and asked the views of employers, the communities and young people.

The overriding perception is that accessing an apprenticeship is confusing. Barriers included travel to access training and there was a general air amongst the young that to get on meant to get out of the Park. Generally feedback was depressing and negative. There was demand

for skills from employers but it required support. Opportunities for young people did exist but were not seen as attractive.

To bring all the players together an Academy was proposed; not to develop new training but to repackage existing programmes in an exciting way.

The Partnership therefore aims to create new opportunities for young people within the Park; to support the local businesses to employ and train people from the National Park communities; and to contribute to the sustained economic development of the Park. Already the key agencies operating in the Park have engaged with the Partnership. It is not yet clear how they will each support but the intention is to use their support to inspire further engagement, bring training to the Park at all levels and identifying progression routes.

The concept of a 'shared' apprentice scheme is also being considered which will help smaller employers engage with the scheme. The creation of a 'Skills Bank' is also being considered. Work will be done to link the initiative with existing programmes, Government strategies and interventions.

Admittedly the list of partners is a long one but Kate emphasised that this was not designed to be a talking shop. The initiative is not aimed at generating an income but to provide interventions – funding of £289,000 has been made available for 3 years operation: Year 1 will see the development and establishment of the Partnership; Year 2 will aim to deliver a pilot for provision with Year 3 targeted for full implementation and delivery.

It is an exciting and unique initiative and may have application for other rural areas.

- 3.3** GB thanked Kate and Clara for their presentation. He noted the issues of the Park community and asked what had been the key in engaging the hard to reach businesses. Kate noted that the initial project had benefited from having a secondee who had taken a list of approximately 250 small businesses and went around all of these to canvass their views. Feedback was logged and followed up; barriers were identified and solutions sought. The hotel and restaurant sector had shown some specific issues – trying to manage staff rotas around training. This had led to the investigation of how a skills bank might operate to support such small businesses.
- 3.4** Ruth Ohldag of Education Scotland asked about the involvement with local schools/colleges. Kate advised that they were also working at this level. Ruth highlighted the SQA's rural skills for work initiative.
- 3.5** Joe Wilson of SQA asked about the use of technology to overcome the issue of travel and to support delivery direct to the workplace. Kate noted this was exactly why the project was benefiting from having all partners round the table.
- 3.6** Ian McCulloch of ITC, referring to the hospitality sector noted that there should be no need to travel for training to gain the qualification. He cited a project running from 2004-08 by University of Strathclyde to support the supply of chefs to the Isle of Bute where similar barriers existed – particularly when due to rates/taxes staff accommodation had been removed.

- 3.7** Graeme Ogilvy of Construction Scotland was interested in the shared apprenticeship – aware of a couple running in Scotland. He noted some issues however, such as who has ownership of the employer responsibilities e.g. management issues, performance measurement etc. Clara Walker noted there was no real solution yet to this. The Community Partnership could step in as the solution. Gavin Brown asked whether there were any other experiences of shared apprenticeships; if it could be cracked it seemed many could benefit. Clara remarked that whilst micro businesses have a requirement for differing skills they could be complimentary – the key thing was to help remove barriers to young people and in particular the mindset that there is no future for them in the Park.
- 3.8** Graeme Ogilvy noted a further problem: if an employer can only take an apprentice for the short-term, where do they go post-qualification? Kate agreed this was a conundrum. One solution has been to train them to set up their own business. There is an advantage in the proposed scenario due to the link between the Partnership and the National Park Authority which could act as the overarching employer. Ian McCulloch noted the case study of Gateside College where the college employed the apprenticeships and contracted them out.
- 3.9** With no more questions Gavin thanked Kate and Clara once again and moved to the next Agenda item.

4 Workplan – Funding issues

- 4.1** Shona Matthews provided an introduction, noting that the issue of funding has been raised regularly during the life of the CPG but never addressed in a specific discussion. The CPG has been keen to try and understand how the landscape could be simplified. Whilst there was a great deal of funding available it was not always clear to employers, employees how to access this. The timing of funding was not generally aligned with the needs of business, but rather worked on an academic year. This purpose of this discussion is to note the common issues, to share experience and through this identify a blueprint for a solution and to highlight the issues to the relevant agencies with a view to inviting them address the CPG to discuss a way forward.
- 4.2** Helen Martin of STUC lead the discussion by referring to the success of sectoral learning agreements which helped short circuit the training loop putting the Union directly in contact with the individual. Discussing with the employer and union members to create the learning agreement allows a marriage of what is needed by the business and by the individual for their own career progression. It was felt SDS could not have been able to convince or tailor in the same way as a union representative; the Union is acting as the bridge to access the funding. However flexibility within the system is very important.
- 4.3** Pete Cannell of OU agreed that Scottish Union Learning was working well. The plethora of funding is an issue. However his concern was that of transition – knowledge of funding from a particular source can trap people into one place. For example, use of an ILA can make the move from informal learning to formal or higher education more difficult with some waiting for a year in order to access additional funding. He felt there was a need not simply to think about the pots but how to link them since learning is not always linear.

- 4.4 Graeme Ogilvy of Construction Skills Scotland agreed. Access to flexible funding is a major issue but often there are barriers such as age and criteria set in stone. Referring to the particular issue of age he noted that sometimes the specific skills need prevents access to an MA. It was felt that there is often no consideration given to the fact that roles are very different and age a factor.
- 4.5 Jim Murphy of JHP Training commented that providers and individuals don't understand the funding system. Joining up the funding streams may create valuable competition. To get a structured learning plan in place will require government action.
- 4.6 Joe Wilson of SQA noted the value of using SCQF levelling – using it to identify progression from programmes. He also reminded members about the SCQF work to include work based learning to the framework.
- 4.7 GB thanks everyone for their contributions and would review and determine a course of action with the relevant agencies.

5 A.O.C.B

- 5.1 Graeme Ogilvy of Construction Skills Scotland asked if the CPG might discuss the Richard Review - whilst the impact is really for England he felt there was some value in sharing views around the table. There was general interest and agreement to this proposal.
- 5.2 Shona Matthews noted that Gillian Black was stepping down from her role at OPITO and proposed a vote of thanks for her support and contributions to of the CPG since it started. Members wished her well in her new venture.

Appendix 1.

Cross Party Group on Skills

AGENDA

12.45pm Thursday 6th December 2012

Committee Room 2, The Scottish Parliament

1. Welcome

- Short presentation from Lifeskills - lunch sponsor

2. Minutes and Actions from last meeting

- Matters ongoing/ arising
 1. Joint meeting with CPG for Colleges and Universities – further meeting as yet not agreed
 2. Discussion on funding issues – see item 4

3. Presentation – National Park Skills Partnership/Academy proposal

- Presentation by The Community Partnership Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park
- Group discussion

4. Workplan

- Discussion – how to improve the funding landscape in Scotland
 1. Case studies requested

5. AOCB

6. Close and date of next meeting - 7th February 2013

Appendix2

DEVELOPING AND DESIGNING A SKILLS PARTNERSHIP / ACADEMY



AN INITIATIVE BY THE LLT NATIONAL PARK COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
Supporting communities in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

Summary for the Cross Party Committee on Skills
6th December 2012

Kate Sankey, Vice Chair LLTNP Community Partnership & Non-executive Director 'champion'
Clara Walker Development Officer Community Partnership

Background

The Community Partnership's existing construction trades' Apprenticeship/Business Partnership Project is coming to an end in 2014 and on the back of its success, we are keen to ensure that there continues to be training opportunities and support to young people who wish to train and work in and around the National Park. The Partnership is particularly keen that its future work supports the retention of young people within the rural area. The Partnership commissioned a study in June 2012 to develop proposals that would explore training needs and opportunities in the area that would in turn help mitigate against outward migration, as well as supporting key employment sectors within the National Park. Priority areas for development were identified from the outset as: Tourism, Land-Based Work and Local Food Production. This proposal is the culmination of the work we have undertaken since June 2012.

This is a skills intervention that has economic development at its heart. In driving up the demand for skills from employers and young people in and around the National Park, the project will contribute to economic growth.

Project aims

Building on this research, our proposal is to establish a new training and education initiative for the people who live and work in and around the National Park area, using existing programmes, facilities and resources in new ways and bringing together new training and education provision. In doing this, we will:

- create new opportunities for young people from National Park communities to train and work within the Park;
- support local businesses to employ and train young people from within National Park communities;
- contribute to the economic development of National Park communities by:
 - improving the training product and range within the National Park within the tourism and hospitality sector and within the land-based sectors, particularly where there are major new tourism or land based developments taking place;
 - improving customer satisfaction and business performance and raising skills and productivity in the tourism and hospitality sector and the land-based sectors, particularly through raising understanding and communication of the special qualities of the National Park for visitors and residents alike;
 - increasing retention levels in the sector by motivating employees through continuing professional development and clarified career opportunities, particularly where expectations and aspirations are low;
 - improving the attractiveness of the tourism and hospitality sector and the land-based sectors as a

career choice within the National Park, particularly through working with employers to provide more motivating opportunities.

- contribute to the health of local communities by encouraging young people to live and work within the National Park;
- put Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park on the map as the place to come for education and training in the key National Park economic sectors.

Project activities

The proposal is to support a co-ordinating function that will bridge the gap between employers, skills providers and young people. Activities will involve recruiting a manager and assistant for the initiative who will:

- Develop further and formalise the partnership of employers, skills providers (colleges and universities), public bodies and voluntary organisations;
- Produce an operating plan for the initiative;
- Work with the partners to establish a coherent programme of Rural Apprenticeships, training and education opportunities in key sectors (land-based and tourism), to be delivered by a number of training providers who would run courses in the area. Provision will be accessible to young people and employers, with co-ordination meaning that training providers come to the National Park to deliver training, or develop specific solutions to make training accessible to individuals living and working in and around the National Park. We will ensure that there is training provision available across a broad spectrum of Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels, from entry level vocational training through to higher education. This will also provide clear progression routes for individuals;
- Establish a trainee or apprentice sharing scheme, acting as a facilitator so that small employers can come together to employ and/or train a young person, and ensure robust employment structure;
- Produce a plan to promote the tourism and land based sectors as careers of choice – by improving information on career opportunities and raising the image of the sectors to public agencies (Jobcentre Plus, Careers Scotland), schoolchildren, jobseekers and other residents, so that they are not seen as a 'career of last resort';
- Work towards improving the long-term sustainability of jobs within the tourism and land-based sectors to establish long-term career opportunities for young people in an area that has traditionally been perceived as providing principally seasonal opportunities.
- Creating new possibilities for employability provision within the National Park, by co-ordinating opportunities with employers and working with youth services in and around the National Park. This will provide a reach into the more deprived urban communities outside the National Park boundary, creating chances for young people in those areas to develop employability skills within the National Park.

The barriers to community access to the project lie in the dispersed nature of settlements and challenges in accessing skills providers (cost of travel to college, lack of information, availability of affordable rural housing etc). In addition, skills providers experience a range of difficulties when delivering programmes in rural areas compounding the barriers to access. These are related to transport and small numbers of customers and businesses.

The project is set up precisely to tackle the barriers to education and training experienced by rural communities. The project objectives and activity is focussed entirely on increasing participation from rural communities in skills and training activities. As part of feasibility study – young people and stakeholders (employers) were consulted through web survey, telephone and one-to-one meetings and stakeholders meeting. The Community Partnership is a community membership organisation and has consulted across its membership on the proposals, hence we are confident that it has grass root support.

We have held two stakeholder meetings with support committed by Oatridge (SRUC) and SAC (SRUC), Forth Valley College, LANTRA, Skills Development Scotland, the LLTTNPA, Callander Youth Project, Stirling Council, a University, Scottish Land and Estates. The view of this group was that the project should be developed and launched, which has been further evidenced with their offers of support over a very short timescale. We have been offered match funding by UWS, Forth Valley College and the National Park Authority with indications of future support from Scottish Government, SDS, LANTRA and SRUC. A

This initiative accords with The National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017 launched by SG in June 2012. The Partnership engages with all agencies active in the National Park. And under the Rural Development Priority: Rural Economy, the Apprenticeship Scheme is a Priority for Action. All four LAs within the NP identify highly relevant issues within their SOAs and Community Plans. There is a need to pursue economic development priorities, which is highlighted in their economic development strategies and plans, where reference is made to developing skills and employment opportunities for young people. Eg. Stirling Council's strategy commits to building "the capacity of employers to provide more apprenticeship, training and employment opportunities, in particular for young people, in ways that enhance business competitiveness and profitability." Importantly, "barriers to employment will be assembled, and supplemented through direct discussion with those currently not in employment. On this basis we will work systematically to overcome those barriers. Wherever possible, we will use innovative approaches, including new solutions to transport access issues in rural and semi-rural areas."

Similarly, a key challenge in West Dunbartonshire is to provide routes to employment for those who are some distance from the labour market.

Project Outcomes

- **Revitalising communities** : Retaining young people within rural communities is fundamental to community sustainability. In addition, improving opportunities for local businesses to take on young people, will help to maintain sustainable local business. Both are crucial elements in revitalising communities and are two project outcomes. Working with locally based community groups and businesses, the project will strengthen the links between all sections of the community.
- **Contributing to the economic development of communities in and around the National Park** : This will be achieved by improving the training product and range within the National Park; improving customer satisfaction and business performance and raising skills and productivity; increasing retention levels by motivating employees through continuing professional development and clarified career opportunities; improving the attractiveness of the tourism and hospitality and the land-based sectors as a career choice within the National Park.
- **Creating new opportunities for young people from National Park communities to train and work within the Park** : Retaining young people within rural communities will be secured through the provision of training and employment opportunities that are accessible and affordable for them.
- **Supporting local businesses to employ and train young people from within National Park communities**: Helping maintain sustainable local businesses through provision and support of local skills. Particularly those that a micro-businesses or/and with seasonal needs.

The first two years is currently the subject of an application to Forth and Lomond LEADER. The application will be determined early December. The project is a market intervention and, like most skills initiatives, will require continued support unless and until it is no longer needed.

Since the benefits of training accrue to employers, providers, individuals and the public sector, however, the public sector may decide to accept a limited ongoing investment to ensure that the benefits of a successful project continue.



Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Community Partnership Dec 2012

Supporting communities in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park

c/o National Park Headquarters
Carrochan
Carrochan Road
Balloch G83 8EG
Tel: 01389 727762
www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk