



**REGIONAL FORUM
NORTH EAST
MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

Wednesday 18th June 2008

Commencing at 10am

Held at Aker Solutions, Surtees Business Park, Stockton on Tees

Present

Mr John Hornby (JH) - Aker Solutions - **Chair**
Mr Don Atkinson (DA) - ECITB
Mr Brian Marchant (BM) - ECITB
Mr Russell Coleman (RC) - TTE
Mr Alan Roberts (AR) - C&A
Mr Martin Foster (MF) – NETA
Mr Grahame Bell (GB) - NETA
Ms Lynn Mitchell (LM) – Cordell
Mr Colin Myers (CM) – Studsvik
Mr Ian Muscroft (IM) – Aker Solutions
Mr Gary Milne (GM) – Hydratight
Mr Martin Hottass (MH) - Siemens

In Attendance

Mr Bill O'Connell - Macmillan Academy
Miss Linda Young - Forum Secretary

Apologies

Mr Tony Featherstone– ECITB
Ms Ann Waldon - Aker Solutions
Mr Nigel Cartwright - AMEC
Mr Peter Mudie - R. Blackett Charlton
Mr Peter Bianchi– Phoenix Training
Mr Brian Hunt – Durham Structures
Mr Jeff Mulroy – EIWHS
Mr Joseph Henderson – Henderson Process Systems
Mr David Bilton – David Bilton Engineering
Mr Paul Griffiths – IMH
Mr Richard Vart – Whessoe Oil & Gas
Mr Geoff Wilson – EEF Northern
Ms Maureen Judd – The Clark Chapman Group

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

JH welcomed all present to the Forum and to the new building. We need to address the high level of apologies/non attendees

Action: JH and DA

2. Minutes of Last Meeting for Approval

The minutes were approved and passed as a true record.

3. Matters Arising From Previous Meeting

DA explained that the ACE programme was now funded by Train to Gain and that the response from ECITB regarding the repayment of £692 was that they are unable to pay this.

DA reported that all Regional grant payments are claimed from the region that levy is paid this is generally where the Head Office is situated. The Apprentice grants payments for AMEC have now been paid.

DA had sent out CV's of those awaiting placement to Siemens.

It was reported that Peter Hill (Director of Finance) was still working on a detailed budget summary and hopefully this will be ready to send out with the next minutes.

DA reported that cross checking of EU qualifications with English equivalents was available on the ECI website for those members with a password.

4. Regional Discretionary Awards

DA reported that some members had already submitted claims and that we had some money left to spend (£50,000) and asked members for their suggestions.

It was reported that £11,000 had been spent on TheatreAnd.

A discussion took place as to how we could spend this surplus money.

DA reported that we were planning to hold a regional celebration of achievements evening – apprentices, SMTD, etc. and that we should invite parents/relatives to the evening and provide refreshments. It was noted that this was the first year of the Project Control, and that an end of courses event is to be held on Thursday 10th Juy.

Action: DA to contact Phil Cooper regarding the completion of Project Control event and the venue.

JH intimated that as there were 15 Project Control trainees, they should be taken on site visits which will provide them with a good insight to site work such as Safety etc.

DA reported that the Project Control “pilot” had been very successful and that other parts of the UK were looking to run this. The materials had been developed in the NE at NETA and ECITB will role this programme out to other areas in the UK. A suggestion was made that may be “under licence”?

Project control apprenticeship pilot reaches important milestone

Engineering construction students in the North East have completed the first year of a pioneering pilot apprenticeship designed to bridge an industry skills gap.

The 14 project control apprentices presented their coursework findings in front of an audience which included senior staff from the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) and representatives from local employers.

The group began training with the NETA Training Group last September after the ECITB responded to employers requests for the qualification.

NETA was commissioned by the ECITB and has developed under contract, a suite of learning resources which can be used by other approved centers to deliver Project Control apprenticeship programmes

The Advanced Apprenticeship has initially focused on achieving an NVQ Level 2 in Project Control Support and a National Certificate in Construction, delivered by Darlington College.

Don Atkinson, Regional Account Manager for the ECITB North East region, said: “Traditionally those filling positions in project control have worked as supervisors on engineering construction projects or are graduates who have specialised in the area.

“Employers have found the pool of talent with the broad knowledge base required has been diminishing for a number of years.

“This apprenticeship programme will bring young people into the industry with the knowledge and experience across the wide range of disciplines to enable them to hit the ground running.”

AMEC, a major international project management, engineering and consultancy group, have put forward seven of the candidates, with the others coming from Aker Kvaerner, Siemens, K Home International and companies and Alpha Plus from the Yorkshire and Humberside region

As part of their training the apprentices on the pilot course were split into three groups which each worked on a simulated civil engineering project.

Philip Cooper, Project Manager from the NETA Training Group said: “The course followed a real world engineering construction process through concept, planning, execution, completion and handover to client. The three building challenges used to develop the apprentices skills were a gym, restaurant and community centre. We found that these projects were easy for the apprentices to visualise and information,

such as cost of materials, is widely available. The knowledge they have gained will be crucial regardless of which sector of the industry they go into.”

The apprentices will now complete the NVQ Level 2 in Project Control Support before starting an NVQ Level 3. A new intake of project control apprentices will begin their training in September and the ECITB are working with NETA to develop a range of training materials so the course can be rolled out across other regions of the country. The learning materials are also being used in the development of a project control programme for personnel working offshore

5. Apprentice Programmes

DA reported that the ECITB were looking to take on over 100 people in the NE region. Lots of interest had been shown – over 800 enquiries and 600 application forms had been received. NETA had also received the same amount of applications. Marketing of the ECI Industry has worked well, e.g. over 1,000 people attended the Careers Event at Middlesbrough Football Club.

It was reported that NETA were the ECITB’s chosen provider and that they had done an excellent job in testing and interviewing candidates for September 2008 intake. Companies are now interviewing and offers of employment are soon to be made.

JH reported that he had attended the Management Board and reported that a total of 750 apprentices were sought for 2008. To move from 250 a few years ago, to 750 today shows great ambition and would be a major achievement.

DA reiterated that five learners were still awaiting placement on the old NASEC programme where we still pay training allowances, ECITB would welcome any interest from companies to take on 3 Mechanical Fitters and 2 Welders. The ECITB would pay the first month’s “trial” period.

Concern was expressed regarding the fact that as these learners were being paid, they were not seeking employment themselves? DA said that we do not have a problem with them looking for potential employers themselves; otherwise they may be put back into the training centre to keep them up to date. Those finishing NETA in July will then transfer to employed status.

MF stated that the retention rate is approximately 96% for the ECITB apprentices and NETA are monitoring the apprentice’s progress.

6. TECSkills

BM reported that AMEC are using TECSkills the most. There are 19 L2 registered and 9 L3 registered for 2008 and that we are down on L3 figures half-way through the year. The target being 40.

DA said that we needed more companies to take up TECSkills as there was money left in the budget. This is a way of upskilling people to a higher level.

RC was concerned that the lack of take up may be the complexity of the programme, or to open it up to non-inscope companies.

MF thought there may be a problem with the grants - £2,000 is paid for a level 2 which was originally £5,250, this may deter companies from using Tecskills.

GB thought there should be some marketing for L3.

A discussion took place regarding costs of TECSkills and companies using Train to Gain.

DA thought the problem may be that companies were too busy and that training was a lower priority at present.

7. Short Courses

DA gave an overview of SMTD courses taking place in Darlington. If these courses were not taken up by North East companies as first thought, we could open up any spaces left to other companies from other parts of the UK.

DA reported that the Active Cup will be held at Cranfield University on the weekend commencing 4th July. The ECITB have entered a team.

There is a link to this on this ECITB website.

8. Budgets

DA reported that the North East has a budget of £1,868,965 for 2008.
(£1,723,255 + LSC £145,710)

DA and JH gave details of the status quo with respect to the NE take up of available funding.

JH advised that all Regional Chairs were expected to report their financial position at the next Regional Chairs Mtg. on 20th Aug 2008.

Any surplus/non-accrued funding would be redistributed.

JH considered this totally unacceptable.

9. New Schools Diploma

DA welcomed Bill O'Connell, MacMillan Academy, to the meeting.

Bill gave an overview of the new Diplomas if any one has any questions please contact Bill at MacMillan Academy Middlesbrough.

The new diplomas coming out were:

L1	Foundation	GCSE – Grades D-G
L2	Higher	GCSE – Grades A-C (7.5)
L3	Advanced	A Level – (3.5)

A consortium for Engineering has been set up between MacMillan Academy, Middlesbrough College and Ormesby School. Stockton Riverside College was coming on line next year. They were now working with employers and Trade Unions as a small group to put the Schemes of Work together. Students must have 10 days work experience and he was seeking support from employers.

The Russell Group will not take on students unless they have A Level Maths. Students could get to University through the Diploma route, but they need employer engagement. They were aiming at Year 10 students who have to do a 10-day work placement on L2. The new Diploma will give Employers a good candidate in the future.

IM reported that Aker were already working along with 14-19 year olds in Middlesbrough and Stockton and have already committed in starting the Diploma and the required 10 days per level.

It was reported that the Schools Diploma also included construction – Richard Leeman was involved and that we should make people aware of both developments.

The Diploma is one of a number of reforms designed to widen the range of options available to students. They have been developed in partnership with employers, schools, colleges and universities to motivate and engage more young people. The main ethos of the Diploma programme is applied learning with 50% of the learning being delivered with a “hands on” approach. With this in mind the involvement of industry is essential to provide the young learners the chance to develop the skills and knowledge taught in the classroom, in a “real life” setting.

Diplomas are a new qualification offered at three levels: Foundation, Higher and Advanced which combine academic subjects and practical skills in a way that reflects modern industry practice and the demands of a degree course.

- The Foundation Diploma is equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D-G
- The Higher Diploma - seven GCSEs at A*-C
- The Advance Diploma – 3¹/₂ A-levels at A*-E

In addition to the mains subject areas (**Principal Learning**), students will also develop their skills in English, Maths and ICT, again in an applied fashion. These are called the **Functional Skills** and will be tested via externally set examinations. In addition, students will be given the opportunity to develop their **Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills** which include

- team working
- independent enquiry
- self-management
- reflective learning
- effective participation
- creative thinking

In order to offer a choice of either concentrating on their chosen line of learning or broadening their education, students will need to choose another subject at the same level which will either add to their specialist knowledge or add another strand. This is

called **Additional and Specialist Learning**. For example an engineering student could choose to study an additional engineering subject such as science or electronics or may choose a subject such as a foreign language. Students will also complete a **project** where they will, with minimum support, identify a problem, plan and design a solution.

As a final and very important strand, all students will need to complete a ten day **work experience** which will give them the opportunity to apply what they have learned in an industrial setting. This is a vital aspect of the Diploma programme and is intended to underpin the whole concept of the new qualification. Students would need to carry out meaningful tasks that would give an insight into what would be expected of them in the world of work.

This broad mix of knowledge, understanding and skills will equip young people for college, university or employment.

10. ACE Update

DA gave an overview of the ACE Report for MAY 2008 and asked if we needed a separate meeting after the Regional Forum or to keep it as part of the forum. Do we invite Unions to the Forum?

JH fully supported the inclusion of ACE issues in the NE Forum.

He did however suggest there were several issues to debate prior to any change.

Action: JH to discuss with DA and advise.

There was a joint ACE/CSCS card and JIB card which give access to all sites without having to carry two cards. People can have ACE logo put on the JIB card.

The cost of the ACE card has been removed and a separate registration fee put in place. The approved centre now pay's the charge. In-scope companies carrying out ACE assessment – no charge. A training provider carrying out for in-scope companies - £50.00 and £100.00 for non-scope companies.

RC was concerned that companies were still unsure about the charges, which slowed down the selling process.

Funding is now available for ACE assessment through Train to Gain, for L3 candidates. Some employers may have to pay the employers contribution of £692. This may change in August.

RC stated that different regions have different funding. Any extra costing will have to be passed on to the customer.

DA reported that Train to Gain has large amounts of money to offer. ACE is on-going and we are getting to the stage where re-approval of the card will happen, this occurs after five years.

11. 17th Edition Electrical Regulations

It was reported that C&A have successfully run the first course through Hartlepool College. There are two levels – updating and full course. Courses are also available at NETA/TTE.

DA is collecting requirements from companies to arrange dates, for course(s).

12. Any Other Business

TheatreAnd 2008

DA reported that the TheatreAnd Roadshow would be showing for a two-week period in September. Most dates were full, there was one day available (24th September) if any member was interested.

A DVD had been produced of 2007 events and what the plans are for 2008. This was available to any member who would like a copy.

S1M Forms

DA reported that S1M forms had been issued to all employers which had to be returned by 30th June. There were lots of outstanding forms and DA stated that reminder letters would be sent out. If anyone required assistance, DA/BM were happy to oblige.

SMTD Foundation Degree

DA reported that we are talking to Teesside University about the possibility of converting the SMTD programme to Foundation Degree by taking units geared towards supervisors in engineering.

IM confirmed that Aker Solutions would be keen to get involved.

Levy

JH reported that he had returned from a Management Board meeting where the levy was discussed and the sensible options that were available for application. DA said that ECITB would hope to get a three year resolution this year instead of every year this would give us greater power for planning of training and capacity.

JH resurrected his vision of a (Teesside) Supervisory Academy

Supervisory Academy – SMTD (Base)

- Foundation
- Management Teams (2)
- Achieving Tasks (2)
- Health & Safety
- Presentation Skills

This ultimately leads to the Gold Card.

JH is wanting to raise the bar for selected, proven Supervisors as he believes the key issue in the Engineering Construction Industry is the competence and quality of the supervision on Site.

We accept that the Labour Force is important, as are Project Controls and Project Management but the key discipline area is Supervision.

This initiative is separate from the Foundation degree as the people will almost certainly carry different attributes.

We should address this as a Teesside/North Eastern initiative and there is funding available.

The Higher Level Skills set would include training modules in:-

- Commercial Awareness
- Major IR Skills
- Project Control - Planning
 - Cost Control
 - Forecasting
- Resource Management
 - Local
 - National
 - International
- Communications

We would also consider:-

- Status in Region (contractor driven)
- Transferable skills (inter-company)
- Recognition of status
- Terms and conditions of Employment (staff)

We can get a Supervisory Academy set up in the North East.

LD thought this was very comprehensive and was in full support especially the Commercial Awareness and Major IR Skills which Cordell would be interested in.

GM was concerned that supervisors get “poached”.

The Supervisors may then use the Academy status to enhance their own status and earning capacity – we live in the real world and have to manage this.

Action: JH seeking help – to contact Teesside Contractors, EEF and TU Reps.

It was noted that Nigel Cartwright (AMEC) was previously in full of this – his successor is Neil Watson.

A discussion took place as to the benefits of this Supervisory Diploma.

It was reported that ECITB VQ's are being re-accredited in the short term. VQ's might cease to exist. Richard Dodd is now looking at all qualifications. People are being asked to complete an on-line questionnaire. Any feed back would be appreciated.

11. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting of the NE Regional Forum is scheduled to take place on:

- Wednesday 15th October 2008, at Middlesbrough College, Middlehaven.

The next off-site forum would take place on 2nd July at the Coffee Exchange in London.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.15 p.m. and JH thanked everyone for attending.