



**REGIONAL FORUM
NORTH EAST
MINUTES OF THE MEETING**
Wednesday 14th October, 2009
Commencing at 10am
Held at The Thistle Hotel, Middlesbrough

Present

Mr. John Hornby (JH) - Aker Solutions - **Chair**
Mr Don Atkinson (DA) – ECITB
Mr. Tony Featherstone (TF) – ECITB
Mr. Mark Rae (MR) - ECITB
Mr. Alan Roberts (AR) - C&A Pumps
Mr. Martin Foster (MF) – NETA
Ms Fallon Faulkner (FF) - Aker Solutions
Mr Daniel Gallagher (DG) – Siemens
Mr Dave Burton (DB) – Siemens
Mr Grahame Bell (GB) – NETA
Mr Geoff Wilson (GW) – ECIA
Mr Colin Myers (CM) – Studsvik
Mr Gary Milne (GM) – Hydratight
Mr Peter Mudie (PM) – R Blackett Charlton

In Attendance

Mr. Duncan Week (DW) – ECITB (Sector Compact)
Mr Neil Armstrong (NA) – Business Link North East
Ms Debbie Wilkinson (DW) – 20/20 Business Insight
Miss L. Young - Secretary

Apologies

Mr. Ian Muscroft – Aker Solutions
Mr. Neil Watson – AMEC
Ms Kirsten Lightfoot - AMEC
Mr Peter Bauckham – Argos Inspection
Mr. Jeff Mulroy – EIWHS Ltd
Ms Vicky Drake – Siemens
Mr Martin Hottass – Siemens
Mr Barry Holding - Siemens

Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

DA welcomed new and old members to the Forum.

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes were approved and passed as a true record.

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

There were no matters arising from previous Minutes as all items are covered on the Agenda.

MINUTES

1. 2009 and 2010 Plans

North East	Plan for 2009	Actual To date	Plan for 2010
Apprentices	100	74	70
Skills and Technical	80	13	80
Management and Professional	450	318	242
ACE	300	165	300
Regional Discretionary Grant Learners	150	1156	450
Totals	1080	1726	1142

DA gave an overview of the total numbers. We are on target.

Apprentices have been taken on by ECITB as programme led in the first year at NETA, we are also interviewing apprentices originally employed by Corus to be programme led at TTE for employment by companies in summer 2010. There are no guarantees for employment but ECITB would hope to get them employment. Trainees should be prepared to travel as the workload on Teesside is low at present and is not expected to increase much over the next 6 months.

DA reported that he had received telephone calls from unemployed people, mainly Riggessr, who were seeking the ACE card – as they could not gain employment without it.

Siemens have now re-located their offices from the Midlands to Newcastle.

TF reported that within Skills and Technical registrations and completions have been low at L2/L3 qualification, the numbers have reduced due to the downturn in work. The type of learner could change going forward using the endorsed courses such as (e.g. bolt tensioning, etc.)

GM reported a huge increase within Hydratight, from both offshore and onshore, these are very well received. What is missing is a “competence” course. A lot of learners look for “competence”. (2 x one-day course).

2. Regional Discretionary Fund

- A Basic £50,000 was allocated in 2009 also an additional £258,000 was Allocated
- All RDF money has now been allocated
- Over 1000 employees attended courses
- All invoices MUST be submitted by 30th November 2009

DA reported that some claims are on a “waiting list” as all money is now committed.

3. Apprentice Programmes

DA reported that NETA are delivering most of our 2009 apprentices. 39 employed started in September and 35 programme led have been taken on mainly to make group sizes viable, 25 from NETA, and 10 from TTE.

It was reported that ECITB are interviewing ex Corus apprentices who have completed the first year off the job and are now into the second year. ECITB are trying to help find jobs for these people.

JH is appalled that other training providers were yet again taking on apprentices without any pledges from employers jobs.
TTE had taken on another 150.

NA spoke about the difference between skills needs and employment needs. A skills needs within the industry already needs to be taken into account with existing funding. What are the opportunities within the industry? A balance is needed.

TF said that this is the first year we have done this. There is no promise of employment. Apprentices cannot complete apprenticeship without going into work. The Government have set high targets over the next 5-10- years.

Action: JH – To bring up at Regional Chairs meeting.

(Post mtg note: JCH did raise this at the RCs Mtg in Manchester and the Executive will take the matter to a higher level)

NA reported on Section 106 agreement, targeting employing young people from different companies. Need to speak to the department who are able to speak to Regional Development Agency to discuss the need of the industry. A Construction Employment Integrator (CEI) looks at the over all value of the construction site and works out the number of apprentices.

4. **Skills and Technical**

Level 2 Registrations	10
Level 2 Completers	15
Level 3 Registrations	9
Level 3 Completers	6

5. **Management and Professional**

DA reported that SMTD course delivery changed in April this year. These courses are available to both "in scope" and "non in scope" companies

Any company interested please contact MR/DA.

North East Management and Professional figures to date for 2009

257 Delegate Days on SMTD
14 Delegate Days on NAECI Course
16 Delegates attended OPM
9 Delegates attended Strategic Project Management
MSC Manchester 2 Candidates
20 Delegates on One Day Course

Active Cup

Information regarding the Active Cup for January 2010 was issued. Any company who wish to enter a team please complete the application form and send to Sheila Sorley at ECITB head office.

Companies have to pay for accommodation and food. ECITB will pay for training.

6. **ACE**

165 Registrations so far in 2009

300 Planned for 2009

DA reported that we are just over 50% of our 2009 target. There are not many projects on the go at the moment in the North East. The current work situation is pushing for employees who hold an ACE card.

TF reported that the figures nationally are up. Over 6,000 ACE cards have been issued.

7. **Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme (VQRP)**

DA gave an overview of qualifications in England & Wales which are being changed. There is to be a new format, from the current NVQ 1 -5 – there will be 8 levels in the future. We are changing all our qualifications to simplify the system for learners. There is a fear that qualifications that do not get into new system will not get Government funding. We have taken our qualifications and transferred them into a new format. We have consulted with industry and there are Workshops taking place in England.

If anyone has any interest in Instrument & Control and use our qualifications please contact DA.

A Qualifications Committee has been formed consisting of various employers and three members of ECITB management.

NA said that they are all being able to mix and match as requested from businesses. The NVQ is not what they want. They wish it to fit their company's needs.

Purpose

- To clarify qualifications for employers in England and Wales
- Scotland already has a system!
- To simplify the system for learners, employers and trainers
- To make the system more flexible and easier to use

To achieve this through consultation with learners, companies and training organisations

Proposed way forward

- Assess existing qualifications
- Put them into a framework
 - 1 Credit = 10 Learning Hours
 - Award = 1 – 12 Credits
 - Certificate = 13 – 36 Credits
 - Diploma = 37+ Credits
- Eight levels
- Three categories; Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- Register these qualifications onto the Government framework
- This will then be assessed
- If approved, it will attract Government funding
- To be completed by 31-12-10
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Expected Outcome

- Level 3 NVQ, probably a Level 3 Diploma
- Expect a series of Level 2 discipline specific qualifications
- New qualifications should assist multi-skill training
- Consultation process is going well.

8. 20/20 Business Insight

DW gave a background to 20/20 and reported that programmes are offered to ECITB companies. Some members have already attended courses. Courses can be open or delivered "in house". A requirement of 8 delegates (minimum) at a time and location to companies. They have been given the licence to deliver a City and Guilds Project Control course which takes approx 9 months.

Starting from January 2010. Looking for people who want to put people on the course. Cost = £2,780 + C & G registration (£180). Fully funding from ECITB.

Payment is only made on completion. Grants are paid on a modular basis.

DW would send by e-mail to all companies.

9. Supervisor Development Programme

JH gave an overview of the status of the Supervisor Development Programme. Everyone would be involved, e.g. contractors, unions, employers, Clients etc. Terry Lazenby agreed that it should be piloted in NE and ECITB would fund it. Various meetings have taken place with stakeholder companies.

The “Steering Group” working with JH have taken this well down the track but someone now needs to take the lead. It needs to be a senior person who knows our industry, preferably a retired or semi-retired person from an employer company – maybe a Client’s man. Any ideas on who could carry out this role? – please let us know.

Bear in mind there will need to be a lot of pressing the flesh with Clients, Contractors and other to keep the momentum.

It is such a sensitive issue that one political or diplomatic faux pas will set the development back 5 years.

We have agreed to select the Supervisors from two streams – existing respected Supervisors who need some upskilling and can give more and “talented” youngsters who are coming through the system. In both cases the plan is to recognise them and set T&Cs accordingly.

Members were asked to submit details of any upskilling programmes that could be useful that we may have missed to DA. A meeting with Andy Brown has been scheduled.

10. ECITB Sector Compact

- All of the main paperwork has now been completed and agreed by both the ECITB and the LSC are as follows:
 - SSB/LSC Protocols
 - SSB/Skills Broker Protocols
 - Key Facts
 - Questions and Answers
 - Top 40 employers
- The protocols and Questions and Answers can now be found on the LSC website and please see link:
<https://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/ttg/latest/sectorcompacts/>
- More details in ECITB Sector Compact report

DA reported that ECITB were given “A Compact” by the LSC which was money for the Engineering & Construction Industry. The money is to be used for upskilling the workforce.

TF reported that £18m had been allocated for this. The LSC has an overspend so funds are low at present. This is to cover for learners who have already started. The LSC stated that there is no cap on training of 16-19 year old (at the moment). There seems to be too much ambiguity, it’s a case of “wait and see”.

Train to Gain

Non contractual agreement to increase the number of university people going through training programmes.

NA stated that we are looking at other funding, etc, ESF, SMTD modules section. No double funding. No retrospective payments. Any Business Link Funding is aimed at SME's.

DW stated that we need employers to sign skills pledge. All on website. No cost.

NA stated that there are Regional economic priorities. The local £5m ESF funding is not being used. We need to discuss as to access this funding.

Business Link is advised to look at 6 – 12 months ahead at training plans, which SME's do not do.

10. Any Other Business

A Government Productivity Review questionnaire was laid on the table for members to complete and return to DA.

DB reported on the TheatreAnd Roadshow and that 300 children attended his local school and the feedback was excellent. Need to get into other schools.

DB reported on the use of abbreviations, names used by ECITB. Simplification was needed – not acronyms.

DA to take on board.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next NE Regional Forum's will take place in March/June/October 2010. We are looking for suggestions for venues.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:50 p.m. and JH thanked everyone for attending.