



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

Wednesday 1st July, 2009

Commencing at 10am

Held at Middlesbrough Teaching & Learning Centre, Middlesbrough

Present

Mr. John Hornby (JH) - Aker Solutions - **Chair**
Mr Don Atkinson (DA) – ECITB
Mr. Tony Featherstone (TF) – ECITB
Mr. Richard Dodd (RD) - ECITB
Mr. Mark Rae (MR) - ECITB
Mr. Alan Roberts (AR) - C&A
Mr. Martin Foster (MF) – NETA
Ms Fallon Faulkner (FF) - Aker Solutions
Ms Kirsten Lightfoot (KL) - AMEC
Ms Lynne Mitchell (LM) – Cordell
Ms Vicky Drake (VD) – Siemens Transmissions

In Attendance

Mr Chris Mann - ECITB
Miss L. Young - Secretary

Apologies

Mr. Grahame Bell – NETA
Mr. Ian Muscroft – Aker Solutions
Mr. Neil Watson – AMEC
Mr. Rob McBride – Cordell
Mr. Jeff Mulroy – EIWHS Ltd
Mr. David Burton – Siemens Transmissions
Mr. Charlie Gibbs – Whessoe
Mr. Martin Hottass – Siemens Power
Mr. Peter Mudie – R. Blackett Charlton

Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

DA welcomed all present to the Forum and apologised for the small number of company members present due to the ENSUS and PJC meetings being held on the same date.

The following flyers/booklets were laid on the table:

- Bite-Sized Training Sessions from Creative Edge
- ACE Review
- Invitation to Project Control Presentation - MFC
- Invitation to "Engineering Productivity" Seminar – Durham
- Risk Analysis & Management – ECI Master Class

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 Regional Budget

- Total North East approved budget for 2009 = approx. £2.3 million
- Additional discretionary funds available (£258,000) proposal completed for consideration 01/07/2009

DA reported that this money has already been committed and spent. There would be no more money available this year.

- Many areas of 2009 budget already spent/committed i.e. SMTD, Project Management, Careers, Apprenticeships and RDG.
- Additional RDG funds proposed to provide additional funds in some of the above areas.

DA reported that offsite programmes had been very busy this year and that higher level qualifications have been very busy and spare money was being used for up-skilling.

2. 2009 Regional Activities/Update

Apprenticeship Programmes 2009 Plan

- 40 Employer pledges to date – 100 target in North East

DA urged companies to take on apprentices with the predicted upturn in 2010. There was up to £10,000 grants available for each apprentice, which covered the wages bill between now and next year.

- NETA won tender for delivering ECITB apprentices in 2009
- Most testing/workshop assessments/behavioural assessments completed

DA thanked MF and his team.

- Company interviews started now
- Company offer letters hopefully sent out by end of July
- Apprenticeship start date early September
- Support for Business Administration Apprenticeships?

We still had four Project Control apprentices who required employment. (two were being interviewed in Southampton this week). These would be employed at zero cost for a short period of time.

Two pipefitters were still awaiting employment.

Sembcorp and Corus also had apprentices

Companies to let DA/MR know if anyone is interested.

Management and Professional

SMTD courses delivered/scheduled to date in 2009

Aker Solutions, Amec, Cordell, RBC, C&A Pumps

- In 2009 222 people from the North East have attended SMTD Modules
- Other courses to be arranged due to company demand
- List of SMTD licensed providers on website,
- North East licensed providers Phoenix Training Solutions and NETA.

DA explained that SMTD, etc. had been re-branded. From 1st January – 31 March the old system would be in place and from 1st April the change would mean that anyone on a licensed basis could deliver programmes. The licensed training provider will arrange the course. This was a good opportunity for companies to get involved whilst things were quiet.

MF said that NETA were doing a trial run.

TF reported that grant payments were automatic when the training programme was completed. Nobody needed to claim. A grant of £100 was available on completion of task assignment. Companies noted that grant payments were paid very quickly. The training provider is part of the licensing arrangements as to marking the assignments. We now have Quality Control people involved.

Companies to let DA/MR know if anyone is interested.

Project Management

- APM Introductory Certificate
- Operational Project Management 16
- Principles of Project Control

Short Courses

NAECI 14

One Day Bite Size Courses

Safety Awareness 10

DA reported on the bite-size courses offered by Creative Edge. This is done in-house and each course lasts approx. 90 minutes, with a maximum of four per day. The feedback has been very good.

Courses available in the Guide to the Grant. RD reported that these courses were very flexible, some could take place during the lunch break to meet the needs of individual organisations.

Regional Discretionary Fund

- Basic £50,000 total allocated in 2009 budget £258,000 Extra Allocated
- All money has now been allocated for the 1st July Deadline
- 12 Companies have received Regional Discretionary Funding
- Over 1000 employees attended courses
- All courses MUST be engineering skill enhancing
- All invoices MUST be submitted by 30th November 2009

DA had spoken to companies for up-skilling and asked to indicate what the money has been spent on and planned spend for budget purposes. (Application forms are on the web-site) We have committed to spend the whole £300,000 and money has been set aside for the Supervisor Academy.

TF reported that we may be able to pull in more money from other regions if they had an underspend. (Inter-Regional transfer).

Skills and Technical

2009 Targets

40 Level 2 (1 registration)
40 Level 3 (5 registrations)

- 2 Knowledge courses delivered in North East in 2009
- Large amount of TECSkills learners in North East – monitoring process

DA reported that due to the fact that workloads are low, now was a good time to put people through TECSkills. This is also available for Design & Draughting and Project Control.

Grants available for TECSkills if learners achieve training to NVQ Level 2 & 3 or upskilling of existing crafts people.

The WBL Manager (Brian Manager) will co-ordinate TECSkills monitoring and coaching courses to ensure that all learners are looked after in the NE, Y&H and NW regions.

TF reported that the whole of TECSkills can be broken down into “bite-size” pieces with grants (£250.00 per unit) available, e.g. bolt-tensioning course.

3. ACE

- North East 2009 target – 300
- 123 Registrations end of May
- 3 active Assessment Centres working in North East region
- NETA, TTE and ARC
- Email company requirements?

National ACE Information

- 2009 Targets – 1300 registrations/1200 completions (622 reg/354 com)
- Funding
- ECITB Discretionary Funding (Wales/Scotland)
- ACE ISG
- Automatic issue of ACE cards on achievement of ECITB NVQ level 3
- ACE renewal process
- Inclusion of non ECITB qualifications
- ACE pilot – partial assessment for the unemployed
 - Total Registrations – 7233
 - Candidates in Assessment – 1408
 - Completions – 5825
- Total ACE cards issued = 6342

It was reported that the biggest project on Teesside was the Bio-Ethylene and that most contractors are not willing for staff to be put through the ACE programme due to the short time. (1,000 people were on the project).

AMEC were doing ACE later in the year.

JH reported on problems at Sellafield, e.g. language barrier on overseas workers

National funding has been a problem. Train2Gain and LSC funding – new contracts from 1st August 2009. There may be more funding available., which providers have been asked to manage.

DA reported that ACE had passed the five-year life span. There was no referral process from the ISG, no referral process after 2010. There is an automatic issue of ACE cards. A new process is in place for issuing L3.

Companies to let DA/MR know if anyone is interested.

3. CCNSG Safety Passport

DA reported on the new logo launched in January 2009. The old style passport is still valid. A programme E-Learning has nothing to do with the ECITB.

4. Productivity Review

- BERR & DIUS have announced a review of productivity in the industry with the aim of seeking ways to increase the competitiveness of the industry and give recommendations as to how Government can and should help

- Key Factors:

*Assess the state of productivity in ECI in the UK
Identify key inhibitors to productivity
Compare productivity levels (Overseas etc)
Identify specific factors that influence success for UK companies*

- Make recommendations on their findings

- Evidence gathering:

*desk research
meetings with trade organisations and unions; coordinated views
meetings with companies – clients, managing contractors, major
contractors, sub-contractors
survey research
invite views from interested parties – webpage in preparation*

- Head of Productivity Review: Mark Gibson (Whitehall Industry Group)

- Key contacts:

*David Rawlins (david.rawlins@dius.gsi.gov.uk; 020 7215 6536)
Tanya Sheridan (tanya.sheridan@berr.gsi.gov.uk; 020 7215 3840)*

DA reported that this review had been asked for by the Government – an outline of which will be put before the TUC in September/October.

Members were invited to attend “The Big Issue – Engineering Productivity” to be held on Thursday, 2nd July at The Radisson SAS Hotel, Durham organized by Partners for Engineering. Tanya Sheridan, Engineering Construction Review at BERR will deliver a presentation on the National Perspective on Engineering Productivity which will include an update on the Mandelson/Denham productivity initiative. NEPIC is involved. There will also be a presentation on a review on productivity from the contractors point of view.

6. ECITB Sector Compact Update

- 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 Sector Skills bodies were given “Compact” by the LSC which was “ring fenced” money for the Engineering & Construction industry. (Not very clear). The money is to be used for Engineering Industry only geared towards upskilling the workforce.

TF reported that £18m had been allocated for this. There is an overspend. 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”.

7. Qualifications Credit Framework Update

Richard Dodd, Head of Skills and Qualifications Strategy, ECITB, gave an overview of the Qualifications Credit Framework Update which covers all sectors within the UK. According to the Leech Review we need to do something to compete with our international competitors. Qualifications need to be identified. A framework has to fit together. There are a lot of qualifications with similar titles, different assessments, etc. A number of new organizations are being set up to deal with this, e.g. Ofqual, UK Company for Employment and Skills to be implemented from 1st January 2011.

There will be new levels (up to L8).

1, 2 and 3 levels at the moment.

Levels 4 - 5 = Level 4

Levels 6 – 8 = Level 5

There will be a new concept of credits.

One credit = 10 learning hours, therefore 100 hours = 10 credits.

Up to 120 hours (12 credits) will equal an award.

- 360 = Certificate
- + 360 = Diploma

The framework allows flexibility and can define qualifications of a given size, e.g. L3 in Fabrication, L7 in Project Control, we can have any way we want. Much more flexible framework but with a definition of what the qualifications look like.

MF informed the meeting that the Diploma level has nothing to do with Schools 14-19 Diploma. This is a new framework with new ideas.

Each sector of industry has been asked to look at labour market information. What the key skills areas are, and asked to put together a “Qualification Strategy” – to look at the qualifications we will need in the future. Look at company map. We do have

an analysis of all activities in the industry. We have look across the industry to update qualification map (now on website) and have identified what qualification that are needed that we have not had previously. We have looked at safety issues. We have identified that we need new assessments. We have had consultations with industry and will report on progression. We are looking at how we would “migrate” with minimum change necessary. We do not have a problem with our qualifications, which are fit for purpose and working well. We are trying to meet a balance. With TECSkills we need to know who long it takes in learning time on the job. (Guided learning hours). The Government can then look more meaningful to allocate money for that qualification.

The qualifications have to be made up into “bite size” chunks. Each of which “units of assessments”. Need to have a level of credit value (number of hours). Most have clearly defined outcomes. We are getting additional information from groups of organization experts from the industry and looking at qualification by qualification at what we have at the moment and looking at what we have within the framework and complying with regulatory requirements. Companies have been involved in the work.

We have an Action Plan for 2009/10 which indicates a schedule of workshops. We have invited employers, training providers, etc. to participate in these workshops – two days to go through the process of conversion.

If anyone is interested in being represented at any of the workshops please contact Richard Dodd.

8. Development Team Update

Chris Mann, Project Manager, Research & Development, ECITB gave Research & Development update. The aim of which was to develop new qualifications as the industry dictates.

MSc in Professional Engineering for Chemical Engineers

Programme has been developed through the University of Teesside.

The ECITB have looked to generate enough interest to recruit 8 – 10 Graduates to pilot this Work Based Learning programme in Sept 09, interest from the industry has been very poor to date and 09 pilot is not likely.

Estimating

The Project Control NOS have now been updated to incorporate the requirements of the Estimating function. These NOS are now being reviewed as part of a wider NOS review ahead of writing the new qualification for the QCF.

Invitation to Tender has been issued to 8 potential training providers to design this course. This is due for delivery in September.

Plant Layout & Design

5 Units released to working group for piloting in company, 18 units now developed in draft format being reviewed by the WG. Every unit is stand alone
An update of unit development is available on the R&D webpage.

SMTD Online

Development work now complete – snagging/final reviews underway
Module 4: “Managing Safely in Engineering Construction” in pilot stage
Industry launch date to be announced

Project Management Short Courses

Industry contextualised APM Introductory Certificate / APMP / PMI PMP in preparation. Industry survey on VQ requirements

Replacement for EMP

Proposed ECITB designated Certificate Management Programme for graduate engineers at Loughborough University has been developed with comparable content to the former EMP syllabus. ECITB and Loughborough are anticipating a programme for the Autumn of 09.

TECSkills online coaching course

Final stages of development.

The one-day coaching course is now on line.

ECI Career Progression Map

Development of route map showing career pathways through the industry from (pre) entry level to professional development. Currently in definition phase - research and consultation to define objectives, deliverables and methodology. Still a lot of consultation to take place.

Occupational Functional Map

OFM available on website for comments to Andy Brown.

Assessor and Verifier Training courses

Completed, distribution by Awarding Body imminent

Future Development:

Expediting Training
Appointed Persons
Skills Tests

9. Supervisors Academy

JH reported that this was a route to NVQ L4 – senior supervisory and site management. If this was agreed within the companies we could create this status, people would be transferrable within the companies.

There was unanimous agreement and support for the NE to develop and pilot this. If it was successful we would like to go internationally. The ECIA to take to Committee in July/August.

JH/DA will talk to NE companies to ensure we have an agreement in what we are trying to do and we need the support of all the companies and to look at how we take people out of their daily work “elitist”. This would be taking people to another level and recognition. We would look at the levy in the NE.

We need to have a recognized name (take out “Academy”). We need a clear remit from companies.

A discussion took place regarding the L3 supervisor qualification and as to what the right target is to be aimed at. Attempt to put in a L4?

JH said that the proposal was for 12 -18 people within the companies we recognized as supervisors. What are we going to do to take them in the NE as something special. More a competence rather than qualification.

Concern was expressed that there was not a lot of time for training purposes. L4 was far too broad and generic. It was stated that this was not a training course, but based on competence, e.g. four hours per week to take through three modules?

LM thought there might be a lot of HR issues with inter-transferrable employment.

Action: JH/DA to discuss cost issues/competences and take forward

10. Any Other Business

DA reported that the next Offsite Regional Forum would be held in London on Wednesday, 8th July.

It was reported that the Active Cup was to take place this week-end with the winners being announced next week.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next NE Regional Forum will take place on

Wednesday, 14th October, 2009
Thistle Hotel, Middlesbrough

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:45 p.m. and JH thanked everyone for attending.