

Special Interest Group – Education and Business
Wednesday 18 July 2007, 08am @ Unipart

Present: Frank Nigriello - Unipart
Jean Mitchell - OEP
Dave Waller - Oxon County Council
Keith Slater - Caprese Ltd
Shamim Razaq – VWH District Council
Elaine McKechnie - OEP
John Knights - IoD

Ben Jackson – Bicester Chamber
Will Jones – Heritage Construction (Work Experience)
Kevin Stenson - Industrial Trust
Shannon Moore – Oxon County Council
John Hazel – Banbury and Bicester Chambers
Mike Simm – Oxon County Council

1. Apologies

Bill McCardle, Nick Quail

2. Current Situation

EMc tabled 3 documents at the start of the meeting (all circulated with the minutes) – the collated version of all the ‘homework’ submitted since the last meeting and 2 brief reports on the situation in the science and construction sectors.

Overall impressions of the current situation are:

- Too many initiatives with little or no coordination
- Issues around aspirations and attitudes (of businesses, students, employees, parents and teachers) are not being specifically tackled by any initiative
- There are pressures of funding affecting the effectiveness of delivery
- Micro networks on a local level work well – friends/family offering work experience etc
- Need to consider primary, secondary, special and private schools, as well as colleges.

There are 3 main areas to consider:

- Impact on the economy
- Priorities for intervention
- Commissioning and measuring interventions.

3. The Way Forward

KS has recently become Chairman of the MKOB LSPA (Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire Local Skills for Productivity Alliance) which will be tackling specific delivery projects in particular sectors likely to include construction and retail.

Other areas in the South East use their Education Business Partnerships (EBP) to lead strategically on education and business links. For example, the Hampshire EBP sets the strategic direction and then takes certain initiatives forward.

The Oxfordshire EBP, however, has taken more of a delivery route facilitating specific interactions between schools and businesses. Inevitably, there are some schools that do not use OEBP for their work experience etc. The OEBP reports to MKOB EBLO (Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire Education Business Link Organisations) which has suffered from funding issues. OEBP has recently recruited a new manager who will also have some responsibility for raising funding.

There was some discussion about reinvigorating the OEBP in order to bring a more strategic approach to education and business initiatives. SM agreed that this could be a positive action for the County and agreed to write a response from Oxfordshire County Council to the OEP and the SIG about how this could be done. It was suggested that OEBP could possibly be re-named to be the Oxfordshire Education Business *Network* (OEBN) – this may have more appeal to businesses. OEP’s role would be to encourage businesses to be involved in the network. SM also noted that the County Council’s Chairman has offered to host a reception for school heads and senior business people with the introduction of the specialised diplomas – this event could also help re-launch the OEBN.

Action: SM to draft response to OEP/SIG's proposal about the re-focus of the Education Business Partnership.

4. AOB

There was no AOB

5. Date of next meetings

A follow-up meeting will be arranged for early-September (not a Wednesday).

Action: EMc to arrange meeting in early September

6. Action Points

- i. SM to draft response to OEP/SIG's proposal about the re-focus of the Education Business Partnership.
- ii. EMc to arrange meeting in early September