

Angus Lifelong Learning Partnership

Minutes of the Executive Group Meeting held on 26th October 2009 at 3.30pm in Angus House

Present: Neil Logue, Acting Director of Education (Chair)
Cath Ferrie, Angus College
Gary Malone, Volunteer Centre Angus
Rachel Green, Senior Community Planning Officer, Angus Council
Shona Weir, Team Leader, Schools Development Scotland
Graham Hewitson, Principal Community Learning and Development Officer (Angus Council)
Helen Reid, Area Community Learning and Development Officer, (Angus Council)
Tom Davidson, Area Community Learning and Development Officer, (Angus Council)

Apologies: Councillor David May

1. Note of the Previous Meeting

- 1.1 A number of typographical errors in the minute were identified, these will now be corrected.
- 1.2 Gary Malone asked that item 3.5 of the minute be amended to read “a meeting will take place on 2nd October 2009 in which partners will be invited to explore the leadership role of VCA and AAVO”
- 1.3 Item 3.8 on the minute will be amended to confirm that self-evaluations are underway in Forfar and Montrose and not Brechin.

2. Matter Arising

- 2.1 Better Community Engagement Project – a further meeting has taken place with Paul Nellis the consultant from SCDC. Specific proposals to emerge from that meeting were that there should be two strands to the BCE project in Angus, those being:
 - The operation of one or two communities of practice. These will draw managers and/or practitioners from a range of community planning partnership organisations in Angus and invite them to take part in a shared learning experience over a number of months. Participation in the community of practice will involve attending some group sessions, taking part in on-line discussions and exchanges between sessions and taking forward specific aspects of community engagement practice in their own work setting
 - Providing training for representative organisations in the voluntary and community sector, in relation to their role in engaging with communities. The key target audiences for this will be Community Councils and Local Area Partnerships. This aspect of the BCE Project will involve participants attending two workshops and receiving support to take forward their engagement practice from Local Community Planning teams.

The hope is that both of these strands of work will be up and running early in 2010.

- 2.2 WALT Challenge Fund – there was little progress to report in relation to this project. Slippage has now become significant and this area of work needs to be given greater

priority.

Graham Hewitson has been maintaining contact with Scottish Government to keep them apprised of the situation in Angus. To date there has been no draw down of the grant allocated and the next priority is to agree a re-scheduling of this grant funding with Learning Connections.

- 2.3 Local CLD Self-evaluations – the Forfar and Montrose self-evaluations are nearing completion. Draft reports have been prepared. The final phase of this work in both areas will be to convene further partner meetings and invite them to consider the draft report and agree joint improvement actions.

A programme for rolling out self-evaluations across the remaining areas of Angus has been agreed. This is as follows:

- Brechin and Carnoustie – March 2010
- Kirriemuir and Monifieth – June 2010

In addition, some follow-up work will be undertaken in Arbroath to refresh the current self-evaluation and identify progress in relation to improvement actions agreed in 2008. The target for bringing partners together for this activity is December 2010.

- 2.4 Community Engagement Impact Survey – the survey has now been issued to partner agencies and there have been six returns to date, all from Council Services and Departments. The reply deadline is the 30th November and there is still time for other partners to submit returns.

Consideration will be given to issuing a reminder notice to partners in mid November.

- 2.5 16 Plus Learning Choices Coordinator – an advert is currently being prepared for a 16 Plus Learning Choices Coordinator. This post will be recruited in the very near future.
- 2.6 Lifelong Learning UK - Graham Hewitson has written to Lifelong Learning UK, confirming that partners in Angus would be happy to meet with them and requesting suggestions for dates. To date there has been no response. Graham Hewitson will follow this up at a meeting in November 2009.

3. Single Outcome Agreement

- 3.1 Delivery Plan – it was agreed that the partnership should prepare a single delivery plan and have this in place by the end of the calendar year.

This plan will be constructed by extracting key commitments from existing delivery documents including the CLD Strategy, Angus College Business Plan, SDS Business Plan and VCA's Development Plan.

Partners agreed to forward suggested actions for inclusion in the delivery plan to Graham Hewitson at the earliest possible opportunity. A template will be issued.

The Draft Delivery Plan will be considered by the Executive Group at its next meeting on the 9th December 2009.

- 3.2 Presentation to Single Outcome Agreement Implementation Group – a first draft presentation was circulated for comment. A number of specific suggestions for change and improvement were made and noted.

Partners were invited to forward any further suggestions which reflected their agency perspectives to Graham Hewitson at the earliest opportunity.

There will be an opportunity for all partners to contribute content to this presentation, which will be made on the 3rd December 2009, at the Lifelong Learning Collaborative Forum to be held on the 4th November 2009. This will invite partners to consider issue and topics which they think need to be raised with the Implementation Group and to highlight links to other thematic community planning groups.

- 3.3 Resource Issues – the SOA Resources Group is due to meet in the near future and a request has been received for the partnership to highlight any resource issues which are likely to impact on its plans during the 2010 – 11 financial year. Graham Hewitson is drafting a response.

To date the draft response highlights:

- ESOL provision – where there is no guarantee of additional Scottish Government funding beyond 31st March 2010. The absence of this additional funding will have an impact in both Angus College and community based provision
- The general impact of the recession on the voluntary sector. This includes a reduction in the available funding from charitable sources (e.g. Lloyds TSB Foundation which has been suspended and which previously contributed significant sums of money in Angus). The response will also highlight the fact that this reduction of resources is occurring at a time when demand on services is increasing.
- The general impact of savings resulting from the 2010 -11 Scottish Government settlement with Angus Council and other partner agencies.
- Pre-access funding – likely changes to arrangements for pre-access funding from 2010 onwards

The response will also draw attention to some of the funding implications likely to occur in 2011 – 12, specifically it will highlight the contributions made through the Fairer Scotland fund to MCMC work and youth work in Angus.

4. More Choices More Chances Update

- 4.1 A committee report was considered by Angus Council's Education Committee at its meeting on the 21st October 2009. This report highlighted progress to date in relation to MCMC issues, including 16 Plus Learning Choices, and identified improvement priorities for the future. These related to:

- Clarifying arrangements for strategic leadership
- Embedding 16 Plus Learning Choices within the broader MCMC developments
- Appointing a 16 Plus Learning Choices Development Manager
- Ensuring linkage to major developments in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence
- Reviewing and revising partnership approaches where appropriate
- Refining the use of data across partners
- Securing long term funding to take MCMC beyond 2010 – 11

- Securing greater engagement from public and private sector employers in providing learning choices and positive destinations

A number of partners identified other areas in which there were improvement priorities and challenges. These included:

- Capitalising fully on the volunteering dimension of MCMC
- Making effective use of the Future Jobs Fund to provide opportunities for young people in need of more choices and more chances
- The need for gender analysis when planning a range of initiatives in the MCMC field, including training opportunities

- 4.2 School Leaver Destinations – Shona Weir confirmed that Skills Development Scotland staff had recently completed their follow-up contact with young people leaving school at Christmas 2008 and summer 2009. Data arising from this contact is likely to be available to partners in November and Shona will circulate this as soon as it becomes public
- 4.3 Possible Pilot Project – Cath Ferrie reported on a very constructive meeting held recently at Angus College, at which a number of partners considered developing a pilot initiative to cater for young people who were not yet finding positive destinations through traditional routes. Any such pilot would build on existing good practice within the College and partners agencies and provide an opportunity to test out processes for developing individualised destinations for young people, which capitalise on the range of opportunities available across the partnership in Angus.

This discussion had arisen from challenges being faced by Angus College in meeting demand and in placing young people within programmes funded through SDS. Shona Weir confirmed that local SDS staff were lobbying for a greater degree of flexibility in the criteria applied to some government funded training schemes, to allow providers to make opportunities available to young people who required them.

Another feature in the discussion had been the “revolving door” issue. In addition to providing for young people at the point of their first transition from school to a post 16 destination, there is a need to look at other transition points when young people come to the end of further education courses or training programmes.

5. HMIe Inspection of the Forfar Academy Learning Community

- 5.1 Graham Hewitson provided a summary of feedback on the inspection.

Overall the inspection had a positive outcome and HMIe have confirmed that they will not be undertaking any follow-up activity.

The verbal feedback from the inspection team highlighted significant strengths across the range of CLD activity. These included the effective use of accredited youth awards, high levels of volunteering and good engagement with the frail and elderly. Three features of good practice have been identified, those being the Angus Gold seated exercise initiative, Volunteer Academy and work undertaken by the Council and partners to review youth engagement arrangements.

The key improvement needs related to:

- Local community planning and specifically the development of a vision for Forfar and the surrounding area which could in turn inform CLD priorities. There is also a general need to increase the influence which communities/local people have over decisions that affect them.
- Improvement planning and specifically the extent to which partners plan together
- The effective use of management information to inform planning and development.

5.2 Neil Logue confirmed that he thought this had been a good inspection with positive outcomes. He thanked all partners for their input and asked that his thanks be passed on to all those who had contributed to the inspection process.

Neil noted that community capacity building continued to be a challenge in Forfar. This had been highlighted in a previous inspection report and he was pleased to note that some progress had been made, although there is still work to be done.

6. Volunteering Update – Gary Malone submitted an update on volunteering in Angus for circulation to the group with the minute. (attached)

7. Lifelong Learning Collaborative Forum

7.1 Graham Hewitson confirmed that he and Rachel Green had had a provisional discussion regarding the structuring of a workshop for the forum. This will now be firmed up, in light of discussions at the Executive Meeting.

The whole of the Forum meeting will be given over to issues relating to the Single Outcome Agreement and there will be opportunities for partners to contribute to the delivery plan, and the presentation to the implementation group.

8. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 9th December 2009, 3.30pm, Angus House

Volunteer Report for Lifelong Learning Group

Volunteering Research

- Beyond the Trolley Service – volunteering and health in the 21st century completed. Funded by NHS researched and written by VCA. Key outcomes in relation to building the capacity for volunteer management, community empowerment, engagement and equalities
- Volunteer Voices - large seminar planned for November using world café/open space technology
- Volunteering for a Greener Angus – Conference leading to volunteer strategy, 4th December 2009
- Impact assessment on volunteering in SW and health
- Angus Volunteering Strategy – need participation by senior staff

Migrant worker project

- Increase in volunteering by migrant workers engaged in translation
- Link to ESOL Angus College
- 200 Plus migrant workers involved in community and mainstream volunteering
- Volunteering for a Greener Angus campaign underway around all Schools and CP's
- New opportunity for volunteer awards for schools

Volunteer Academy

- Significant increase in unemployment (72% increase in claimants) Pressures on college placements and mainstream volunteering capacity – harder for disadvantaged people to gain positive outcomes. New projects emerging to tackle unemployment, but lacking coherence and partnership – Volunteer Centre 'dumped on'
- Significant increase in demand on Volunteer Academy and Volunteer Centre additional support programme
- New Volunteer Academy life skills centre to open up Jan 2010.

MV Awards

- Continued progress in MV. Fiona Walsh is the new support worker

Leadership for Volunteering and the Third Sector

- Large turnout at 'together we're stronger event. This conference was about the role of AAVO and VCA in leading volunteering and the third sector. The Futures Group work is continuing. Strong support for both agencies to remain separate organisations and clear commitment from Government on this. A summary report will be available in the near future.

National

- National conference of VC's and CVS was held recently. Disappointment over the role of new national network VAS – Voluntary Action Scotland – no discussions with Volunteer Centre Network. Gary is now Chair of the Partnership management Group the representative

body of Volunteer Centres in Scotland. Mai is a member of the Think Tank. Angus is respected nationally.

Volunteer Friendly Awards

- Again good progress with training for volunteer managers and volunteers, with a new quality standard being introduced to volunteer management