

Report to: Regeneration Panel

Date: 21 January 2009

Subject: Wigan Economic Partnership Meeting
Minutes from the Meeting held on 6 November 2008

Report of: Executive Director of Environmental Services

Contact officer: Naomi Sherwood 01942 828961

Purpose / summary: To inform and update Members of the Regeneration Panel on the work and key decisions made within the Wigan Economic Partnership (WEP) (part of the LSP structure).

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: N/A

Recommendation / decision: Members note the contents of the report.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision. The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 30 January 2008.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	N/A
Staffing:	N/A
Policy:	N/A
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	N/A
Wards affected:	N/A

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **No**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **No**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	x		x
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
Regeneration 21/01/09			

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer Martin Kimber

Date 02/01/09

**Wigan Economic Partnership Meeting
Thursday 06 November 2008 at 8.30am
Platt Bridge Community Enterprise Zone**

Minutes

Present:

Nick Yates (Chair)	Stephensons
Miranda Allan	AES Ltd & Chamber
Mark Ashley	Wigan Courier
Diane Brennan	Jackson Stephen LLP
Marie Gillott	Job Centre Plus
Alan Johnson	WEP/WLCT
Cllr Molyneux	Wigan Council
Pam Stewart	Borough Wide Community Network
Nick Trotter	CVS
Elaine Walsh	ProCo/WVN

In Attendance:

Naomi Sherwood	Economic Regeneration Office (ERO), Wigan Council
Kevin Walsh	Economic Regeneration Office (ERO), Wigan Council

Apologies:

Sue Astbury	Children and Young People Services (CYPS), Wigan Council
Susan Gambles	Economic Regeneration Office (ERO), Wigan Council
Dave Jones	RBS
Joe Scalon	Totesport
John Winnard	Wm Santus & Co Ltd

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

1.1 Nick Yates welcomed all to the meeting.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

2.1 Miranda Allan declared an interest in Item 3A and Nick Trotter and Alan Johnson declared an interest under Item 3B. All did not vote on the respective items.

3.0 Worklessness (Miranda Allan)

3.1 Miranda Allen outlined the process that has taken place for round 1 commissions. It has been similar to neighbourhood renewal funding (NRF) with a worklessness working group. Round 1 commissions have gone out to tender, an initial gateway assessment was undertaken which eliminated some tenders and the remaining tenders underwent appraisal.

3.2 The appraisal was undertaken by 4 people whom scored them independently. Those tenders which passed a threshold of 20 marks were invited to interview. Details of tenders and the tender process are contained within the meetings papers.

3.3 Being presented to the meeting today are the recommendations from the worklessness working group. The WEP are asked to ratify these selections. Kevin Walsh thanked Ian Riding for acting as an independent observer and advisor in the opening and scoring of the all tenders.

3a Evaluation Framework

- Four tenderers were brought forward to interview, EKOSGEN had scored the highest in all 4 appraisals. In the interviews it was close between themselves and EDAW but EKOSGEN were selected on the basis of their appraisal score. Nick Yates invited any questions.
- Cllr Molyneux asked where EKOSGEN were based. Kevin Walsh confirmed they were based in Scotland but were looking for a Manchester office.
- N Yates asked the meeting to vote on the proposal. There was unanimous approval from those members that voted.

3b Social Enterprise Strategy Development

- Four tenderers were brought forward to interview, with an indicative budget of £35,000 in the brief all tenders were for similar amounts. EKOS scored highest in the appraisal and interviews and are therefore the recommended deliverer. EKOS are based in Scotland but have an office in Manchester. EKOS and EKOSGEN are separate and independent companies. Nick Yates invited questions.
- Nick Trotter asked who was on the interview panel. Kevin Walsh confirmed Christine Bainbridge, Patricia Evans, Naomi Sherwood and Ian Riding scored the tenders and Christine Bainbridge, Patricia Evans and Chris Farrimond (from Wigan Council's, Chief Executive Procurement Team) sat on the interview panel.
- An invite for volunteers from the Worklessness Working Group was sent but due to holidays, timescales and a skills issues the process had to go ahead with 3 Wigan Council officers. It was recognised this was not ideal as an independent representation in the selection process would have been preferred. This has highlighted the possible need for training so future rounds have a larger pool of available evaluators.
- Nick Yates asked the meeting to vote on the proposal. There was unanimous approval from those members that voted.

3c Round 2 Selective Commissions

- Selective commissions applies to organisations that have been identified to undertake work, this process has been outlined in the commissioning framework.
- Three selective commissions have been identified for round 2. The first of these are responsive information, advice and guidance (IAG) activities

(Ref 4.2.1), this is requesting £50,000 for a flexible and responsive to any redundancy situations, as has been provided to the recent redundancies at ASDA. This has proved very successful and in the current economic climate could be called upon frequently.

- Pam Stewart asked if the skills shop staff would be linked into this activity, Kevin Walsh confirmed they would as well as job centre plus staff.
- The second selective commission is people with learning difficulties (Ref 4.2.6) for £75,000 for an employer engagement post within the supported employment team to focus on developing work placement opportunities for those with learning difficulties.
- Pam Stewart asked if the role would make links to voluntary and community organisations. Kevin Walsh confirmed the activity would focus on the referral agenda and linking to employers, with 200 people on the waiting list for this service it might expand in the future into job brokerage and engagement which would include the voluntary and community sector.
- The third selective commission is long-term incapacity claimants (Ref 4.2.8). Pathways to work focuses upon Incapacity Benefit (IB) claimants that have been claiming for less than 6 months, with no stipulation on areas of deprivation and longer term claimants, which are the claimants that are furthest from the labour market.
- Alan Johnson asked how it would be determined that it was this activity that had got people a job. Marie Gillott said this question was always an issue with any job centre plus projects and there could never be a 100% guarantee that it was this particular activity that had secured the job.
- Marie Gillott also raised contractual concerns over the ability for manchester solutions to tender for this work as they are also getting paid by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the same activity. There were also concerns over additionality and duplication.
- **Action:** Marie Gillott to check if manchester solution's contract with job centre plus allows them to draw down WNF.
- Nick Trotter asked why, for £240,000, this activity was not going out to tender, as stipulated in European Union (EU) procurement legislation. Kevin Walsh confirmed all activity has and will be undertaken with support and advice from Wigan Council's procurement team.
- Nick Yates asked for the meeting to vote on the 3 selective commissions. There was unanimous approval for 4.2.1 and 4.2.6. There was an in principle agreement for 4.2.8 but a further report on the activity to be presented at the next meeting.
- Mark Ashley had to leave the meeting at this point. In his official capacity he is not technically supposed to be a member for the WEP but asked members if they were happy for him to remain. There was unanimous agreement for him to remain a member for the WEP.

- Nick Yates adjourned the rest of Item 3, until after Item 4, as the meeting was behind schedule for the transport innovation fund debate.

4.0 Transport Innovation Fund Debate

- 4.1 The meeting received a presentation from both for and against campaigns for the transport innovation fund (TIF).
- 4.2 The first presentation was from David Wilson the Company Secretary at MACRO, who represented the Greater Manchester momentum group (GMMG), which is the alliance of companies campaigning against the TIF bid.
- 4.3 The second presentation was from Toby Sproll from Bruntwood representing United Cities, the alliance of companies campaigning for the TIF bid.
- 4.4 Members then posed questions to both Toby Sproll and David Wilson. After this Toby Sproll and David Wilson left the meeting and members debated the TIF bid.
- 4.5 Nick Yates asked the meeting to vote on the TIF bid, 5 voted in favour, 1 voted against and there was 1 abstention.

3d Round 2 Open and Competiveness Commissions

- Three proposed interventions are being brought forward under Round 2 and the briefs for this need to be published tomorrow (Friday 7 November 2008). The interventions are:
 - Outreach Engagement: Delivery (Client Engagement) – 4.1.2a
 - Outreach Engagement: Delivery (Small Grants) – 4.1.2c
 - Child Crèche: Feasibility Study – 4.2.15
- Nick Trotter stated in principle he had no objections but Wigan Council has signed up to the compact for open and competitive tendering and asks where the transparency has been in this process. Nick Trotter also raised the issue that a 1 month deadline on the tenders is not long enough for third sector organisations to submit a tender. Pam Stewart supported this issue.
- Miranda Allen pointed out that open and competitive tendering is the default position unless there is an existing organisation able to deliver the intervention. Kevin Walsh maintained that economic regeneration office is happy to offer as much support as is required to third sector organisations.
- Nick Trotter is appreciative of the constraints of the timeframe and asked for, in 6 months time, an overview of the results from all the tenders to demonstrate who has applied and who was taken forward to an interview. Nick Trotter also highlighted a case in Wakefield where there was a weighting to firms with local knowledge.

- Miranda Allen pointed out that local knowledge does not necessarily mean local firms and EU procurement rules would be broken if there was a bias to local firms. Also the small grants activity is aimed at increasing the capacity and development of voluntary and community groups without them having to go through the full tender process.
- Kevin Walsh appreciated the timescale issue for voluntary and community groups but these tenders need to be pushed forward, as soon as possible. The small grants has gone out to open and competitive tender as there are several local organisations that can deliver it and localness will be heavily weighted in the selection of the deliverer. The selection criteria for small grants will also be provided.
- Nick Yates asked the meeting to vote on the proposals. Nick Trotter's concerns were noted but there was unanimous support for these proposals.

3e What makes Wigan Work: Marketing and Communications Plan

- This will require a lot of one to one contact within local communities and will include the development of the voluntary and community sector.
- Nick Yates asked the meeting to vote on the proposals. There was unanimous support for this proposal.

5.0 NRF Interim Evaluation

- 5.1 Kevin Walsh tabled the NRF interim evaluation report for information. Every project funded has failed to meet targeted outputs due to very tight geographical definition and working with those people furthest from the labour market. The original targets were not realistic and this has been recognised and fed into the development of the WNF.
- 5.2 The data from the evaluation will be taken forward by EKOSGEN as part of the evaluation framework and EKOSGEN will bring further reports as the framework moves forward.
- 5.3 Nick Trotter asked for further detail on the social enterprise projects. Kevin Walsh confirmed this would be incorporated within the social enterprise strategy. Kevin Walsh confirmed economic regeneration office have received some concerns through PULSE of re:generate and this is currently being investigated and will be brought back to this forum.

6.0 Accounts 2007/2008 (Alan Johnson)

- 6.1 The winding up of WEP Limited has taken a while, so during 2007/08 £3,000 has been spent on professional fees. The balance sheet has £41,000 in reserves so once the winding up is complete WEP Limited will be solvent.

7.0 Any Other Business and Close

- 7.1 Elaine Walsh informed the meeting of the skills pledge that employers are being asked to sign up to, this involves them committing to supporting all staff

are trained up to Level 2. Wigan Council is yet to sign and Elaine Walsh requested that the WEP push the Council to sign up the pledge.

7.2 Kevin Walsh confirmed there is commitment from Joyce Redfearn for the skills pledge.

7.3 Kevin Walsh thanked the meeting for support and apologised for the late papers, unfortunately in this instance it was not possible to get the papers out earlier, however for future WNF commissioning rounds papers will be made available earlier.

7.4 Nick Yates thanked Kevin Walsh and the team in economic regeneration office for the work involved on the worklessness strategy.

8.0 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 15th January 2009

Martin Kimber
Director of Environmental Services
RP/ER/NS/LC/33.0P
2 January 2009