

Hastings Job Brokerage Learning Lunch and Facilitated Workshop Report

14th October 2008

Prepared by Engage Employment Solutions Ltd

Purpose

This document covers the information both conveyed and recorded by Engage Employment Solutions Ltd during the 9th October 2008 Hastings Job Brokerage Learning Lunch and facilitated Workshop on behalf of Hastings Borough Council. The intended audience is event attendees and other parties interested in bidding for the proposed Hastings Job Brokerage Service.



Making a success of Employer Engagement

**Engage Employment Solutions Ltd
Hastings Job Brokerage Workshop
9th October 2008**

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1. Overview

Hastings Borough Council commissioned engage Employment Solutions (EES), due to their expertise around employer engagement, to design and facilitate a Learning Lunch followed by a Job Brokerage workshop on the 9th October 2008.

The purpose of the workshop was to share the Brighton & Hove model of good practice (The Engage Partnership), summarise other functioning models of job brokerage and to facilitate discussions around what a Hastings model could include.

The workshop was open to all key stakeholders involved both strategically and operationally in training and employment services relating to assisting disadvantaged local people on a path towards meaningful, sustainable employment.

Feedback from the workshop will be incorporated into the tender specification for delivery of a Job Brokerage service in Hastings. The successful bid organisation will be funded from approximately January 2009 up until to March 2011. After this date, a service will need to be sustained through other funding sources and/or revenue streams.

Claire Mitchell (CM), Director of EES, presented Brighton and Hove's model of Good Practice and provided details of comparable models (section 3).

During the day, delegates were given the opportunity to feed into the initiative through question and answer sessions and workshop style discussions. Three questions about the co-ordination of job brokering services in Hastings were presented to the group and the results can be found in sections 3, 4 and 5.

2. Attendees

Alec Mohun-Smith	Tomorrow's People
Andree Ralph	Finding Futures
Annie Hunter	Fellowship of St Nicholas
Andy Noble	Westoaks Builders
Angela Haines	HBC
Amberley Barrington-Peek	HBC
Caroline Braggs	ESCC
Carol Biggs	HBC
Chris Hughes	Shaw Trust
Claire Mitchell	Engage Employment Solutions Ltd
Colin Faulkner	Employment Opportunities
David Chidwick	Amicas-Horizon HA



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Glyn Carter	HBC
Harry Sargeant	DWP
Hannah Brookshaw	HBC
Heather Smith	Hastings Trust
Ian MacCarthy	Tomorrow's People
Jo Bevan	Impact Initiatives
John Challis	Business Link
Julie Curteis	Jobcentre Plus
Karl Kahn	DWP
Karen Barford	Engage Employment Solutions Ltd
Karen Hollands	DWP
Kerry Band	Eastbourne BC
Linda Haley	Finding Futures
Linda Shaw	Working Links
Mary Denning	HBC
N Homeward	BHT
Cllr Peter Pragnell	HBC
Phil Halstead	Excellence Cluster
Phillipa White	Finding Futures
Rob Layne	GEO-TEC
Roger Dando	Jobcentre Plus
Ron Bennett	Ore Valley Forum
Rose Austen	HVA
Rowan Westwood	Eastbourne Connexions Centre
Sarah Eatwell	UCH
Sean Carroll	SEEDA
Sean Dennis	1066 Enterprise
Sheelagh Golding	CSA - DWP
Sonia Plato	Horizons
Steve Manwaring	HVA
Susan Hanson	Tressell
Tony Nardi	Tomorrow's People
Tony Giles	Creating Futures
Tania Bonser	Jobcentre Plus



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3. The Engage Partnership and Comparable Models – *Learning Lunch Presentation*

(* See Appendix 1 for presentation)

The Engage Partnership

- Established December 2005 utilising Equal Brighton and Hove funding
- Equal funded until December 2007 although funding seriously reduced in July 2007 and project lost its administrative support
- Set up to co-ordinate employer engagement in the City
- Previously one large employer engagement group in the City, this was split into strategic and operational groups. The Engage Partnership (previously known as Operational Employer Engagement Group (OEEG)) formed the operational arm. The Employer Engagement Co-ordinator, Claire Mitchell, fed into and took direction from the Strategic Group (renamed the Workforce Development Strategy Group (WFDSG))
- Initially, The Engage Partnership included 40 training and supported employment agencies with a focus on assisting 11 local marginalised groups into employment
- Monthly forums take place for members. The purpose is to network, update one another on service provision, identify collaborative working opportunities and discuss issues and successes etc
- E-forum set up as an information portal for all members – to date over 500 job vacancies have been circulated, although not originally in the objectives
- Training to Engage members from business experts covering salient subjects relevant to employer engagement
- Engage Employment Solutions Ltd (EES) set up to sustain the Engage Partnership in July 2007
- EES currently facilitate the Engage Partnership in a voluntary capacity due to lack of funding; there is a high value to the local community and economy in retaining this co-ordinated service
- Current membership – 28 organisations (numbers reduced as many organisations ceased employer engagement activity following the closure of the Equal programme)
- Products:
 - Good Practice Guide created. Free of charge during Equal programme, but developed into a revenue stream; currently £19.99 + Vat and postage
 - Employment Law Poster in association with Peninsula
 - Employer Liability reduction for businesses offering work placements (George Baker Insurance Brokers)
 - Best Practice Templates; Health and Safety, Job Descriptions, Media Coverage
- EES has introduced membership fees for The Engage Partnership (currently £150.00 per annum, per member) and EES has branched out into consultancy to



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- sustain organisation; for example, working with employers to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and sharing Good Practice around supported employment
- Recommendations:
 - Start up costs - £150,000. over two years
 - Two members of staff to operate
 - Neutrality of co-ordination
 - Embedded into sustainable organisation
 - Requires strong strategic support
 - Examples of collaborative working include Pre Employment Training for Jurys Inn hotel, my hotel and Tourism Forum¹ members
 - Example of this model being adapted to work elsewhere:
 - Synchronise West Sussex

¹ *The Tourism Forum is a network of businesses involved in the tourism sector (e.g. hospitality, catering and retail) that have committed to training new and existing staff and recruiting local disadvantaged people by signing up to a charter. The idea and model for the charter came from the Hastings's construction charter. This was set up by Claire Mitchell in 2007 on behalf of EQUAL Brighton & Hove and is now funded by Brighton and Hove City Council and City College Brighton and Hove.*

Comparable Models

- Brent in2 Work
www.brentin2work.co.uk
- Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB)
www.greenwich.gov.uk/Greenwich/Working/GLLaB
- Surrey Supported Employment
www.surreyemploy.org.uk
- Newhaven Community Employment Partnership (NewCEP)
www.ncda.org.uk/projects/NewCEP

Question and Answer Session

- i. *The Engage Partnership was created in a better economic environment. With the current recession, is it still worth moving forward on this initiative?*

Claire Mitchell - Yes. It is more important when there is an economic downturn and more people out of work to have a streamlined approach to service delivery. It is crucial to recruit and retain the right staff and deliver innovative services. There will be many people freshly out of work so supported employment agencies will need to raise their game to ensure their clients have a chance at securing employment.

This project is for the long term as well as the short term. The idea is that this model is sustainable through any economic situation.



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- ii. *Hastings has a micro economy. With this in mind, how can the Engage Partnership model be adapted to suit these demographics?*

Claire Mitchell - Brighton and Hove also has an SME (small and medium sized enterprises) dominated economy although there are several large businesses based there. The model works well to ensure that SMEs are included. For example, pre-employment training can be put on for a number of businesses in the same sector at one time, where there are small businesses that have only one or two employment opportunities.

4. What should a Job Brokerage service do?

Workshop Feedback

- Partnership working – linkage
- Accessible / relevant
- Skills growth - not to focus on just the 'job', empower people, appropriate skills for market place
- Employer support – aware of the needs of employers, employer involvement, incentives
- Focus on employer/business and potential employee
- Cover town/region/area labour force requirements
- Consistent Message and Branding
- E-Forum
- Offer range of support services
- Free Recruitment and Matching Service
- One Stop Shop
- Ongoing Support Once in Employment
- Strategic Agreement for All
- Do Not Re-invent the Wheel

Question and Answer Session

- i. *There needs to be a strategic agreement in place before this work goes ahead*

Glyn Carter – The area-based grants are overseen strategically by the Local Strategic Partnership and the Hastings & Bexhill Economic Alliance. A lower level of strategic leadership for job brokerage, that sits between these bodies and operational partners is also needed, to ensure that there is a wide sign-up at operational level. Hopefully we have a good starting point with a lot of stakeholders in this room.

- ii. *The name 'Job Brokerage' does not adequately reflect this service, which includes skills, training, volunteering, work placements, employment and partnership working. Not all people will be able to go into paid employment. By the end of this session, a name should be agreed for this service.*



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Claire Mitchell and Glyn Carter – Job Brokerage is a key aim of this project and there needs to be a clear framework in which everyone is working within. If the remit becomes too large, co-ordination will be very difficult. The ultimate aim is to enable local people to access sustainable employment; however, it is accepted that this will not be possible or suitable for every client. Training, placements and volunteering are crucial elements and individuals can benefit society and the economy by participating in such schemes. Clear branding will need to be established in the initial stages of the project and this will not be dictated in the tender; however the focus should be on a job brokerage service.

- iii. *The discussions seem to be concentrating on the formal economy but should include skills picked up by people in the informal economy that can be transferred.*

Claire Mitchell - Any transferable skills of clients should be included in the delivery of the model. Linking with the previous point, some people may not be able to work but they may still contribute to the local economy. Awareness-raising of the benefits of voluntary work and placements should take place. Public sector bodies and other key stakeholders should lead from the front by providing work placements and voluntary opportunities within their own organisations. There does need to be a limit to what the project can deliver. It may be 'phased' to initially target specific sectors or areas of delivery and develop its coverage over time. There needs to be a clear framework so that expectations are managed from the outset.

- iv. *Increasing employment opportunities may not be enough. We may need to create jobs rather than just engage current employers.*

Claire Mitchell – This is definitely an element to be explored and it can be added to the delivery model. Certainly the public sector has a duty to lead from the front being both the largest local employer and offering a supportive working environment. There is a pilot project taking place currently involving a number of homeless providers ensuring that around 12% of their workforce are ex-service users, perhaps this could be looked at by providers in Hastings.

5. Who are the strategic and the operational stakeholders?

Workshop Feedback

Strategic:

- Business Representation - Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Alliance



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- Federation of Small Businesses
- Jobcentre Plus
- Learning and Skills Council – Business Skills, Train to Gain representation
- Local Authority - Hastings Borough Council (Economic Development, Regeneration and Benefits), East Sussex County Council
- Local Business Providers - for example, 1066, Business Link
- Primary Care Trust / NHS
- SEEDA (South East of England Development Agency)
- Social Services
- Support Services, including voluntary sector organisations
- Training and Education Providers - Hastings College, University Centre Hastings, Sussex Council of Training Providers

Operational:

- Community and Voluntary Sector Representation
- Diverse Groups – for example, BME (Black Minority and Ethnic), Disability
- Education Business Partnership
- Employers – sector Champions, business groups
- Housing Providers – for example, Amicus, Brighton Housing Trust
- Jobcentre Plus
- Local Business Providers - for example, 1066, Business Link
- Recruitment agencies – including private businesses
- Schools and Education Providers – relevant to supported employment
- Service Providers – including voluntary providers and supported employment providers
- Service Users – possibly in a break-off group
- Training Providers – for example, Train to Gain
- (Press and Media – buy-in only)

Please Note. One of the six groups stated that the operational and strategic members should be incorporated into one group. Glyn was in this group and what they were saying was there is good communication between the groups and that there should be a mechanism set up to ensure they don't run parallel to each other and that communication is both ways. There will be some organisations that have representation in both groups.

Question and Answer Session

- i. *Some service and training providers are one step removed from actual job brokerage. They may have a strategic part to play but are not necessarily going to benefit from the operational group.*

Claire Mitchell – The Engage Partnership has a specification for membership, set out in its Terms of Reference, so that the discussions and information is relevant to all those present. Other stakeholders may present their services at Forum meetings, use the E-Forum, provide literature for signposting or just read the Minutes so that



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they area aware of the services. Membership needs to be entirely relevant to the overall objective of the groups to ensure meeting content is both appropriate and effective. Caution needs to be taken when considering the number of stakeholders invited to be part of each group; large numbers are hard to manage and will have a negative impact on decision making. The Engage Partnership has a membership of 27 different providers; the average Forum meeting attendance is around 15 to 20 agencies.

6. How will the service be sustained post this funding?

Workshop Feedback

- Determine what needs to be sustained
- Establish the project in the community
- Branding
- Strategic group ownership and buy-in
- Build in commercial aspect from day one
- Phased periods – establish timeframes
- Monitoring results from early on – qualitative and quantitative
- Don't reinvent the wheel - look at other successful models
- Business Plan
- Membership Fees
- Develop and sell products – Directory of Groups, Best Practice
- Consultancy fees – for example, speaker, expertise, HR services to business
- Fundraising
- Risk assessment on the model
- Knowledge of sustainability of the stakeholders
- Financial commitment from stakeholders and partners, if service evidence its cost effectiveness in helping bodies achieve targets
- Provide a one-stop-shop solution
- Match funding / in-kind support
- Collaboration between stakeholders to deliver together
- Identify longer-term funding
- Franchise – develop a portable model
- Option to develop it into a social enterprise
- It was also suggested that as a service, which aims to being benefit in support of public targets – e.g. LAA – then it is public funders who must also take responsibility for sustaining it.

7. Workshop Evaluation

The evaluation forms were completed by 25 out of a delegation of 45 key stakeholders.

(* See Appendix 2 for Complete Results)



Qualitative Results

Delegates were requested to rate the workshop between 1 and 6, with 1 being very poor and 6 excellent:

- Overall Enjoyment of Workshop – 92% rated 4 and above
- Relevance of Content – 88% rated 4 and above
- Delivery Style – 96% rated 4 and above
- Adequate Feed in from Delegates – 80% rated 4 and above, whilst 8% did not comment

Delegates were asked if the key components for the service had been captured:

- 76% stated 'Yes', whilst 16% made did not comment.

Quantitative Results

Delegates were asked to state any key components that were omitted from the workshop:

- 14-19/college agenda not touched on. Looked after children. LD/D – 25
- As well as the offer for paying for insurance for clients that get a work trial placement, what other 'carrots' can employers be offered?

Delegates were asked for general comments. Comments regarding the proposed service follow:

- As an employer a lot of the information was new to me and this was the first opportunity to play a part in the future of Hastings in this format. Provided lots of food for thought about the role we could/should be playing
- Not totally sure what, if anything, has been agreed!
- A good, interesting session that brought many good points, however a difficult session to co-ordinate in order to come away with anything concrete in terms of what the role will actually look like. Too many vested interests? This needs a 'broker' that can engage with the business sector in order to get their buy in.
- The content/feedback must be considered by the commissioning process
- Too much pressure on employers if not careful in light of the pressure of 14-19 college agenda, looked after children etc

8. Summary

The Job Brokerage workshop enabled key stakeholders to come together to initiate discussions around the type of training and supported employment co-ordination that would work effectively and efficiently in Hastings.

The findings from the workshop will influence the specification for the tender and provide a starting point from which the successful organisation can move forward on



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developing a co-ordinated approach to service provision, in partnership with key stakeholders.

The workshop clearly identified a variety of potential stakeholders for the project. More work will need to be carried out to assess the level of contribution required for each stakeholder and which form the model will actually take.

The exercise highlighted the importance of buy-in and commitment from all key stakeholders from inception of the project. The organisation bidding for this work will need to be sustainable and ensure the sustainability of the project post initial funding.



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