

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER, 2006

REVIEW OF EAST DURHAM LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE, MALCOLM FALLOW, EAST DURHAM AND HOUGHALL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND CHAIR OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SUB GROUP –
LEARNING AND SKILLS SUB GROUP**

(I) What was the role of the Sub-Group within the LSP and which Members/Officers from the District Council supported it?

M. Fallow explained that the Group was made up of representatives from schools, further education, community groups/voluntary sector, District Council, County Council, Learning and Skills Council, Life Long Learning, Work Based Learning and employers.

The Learning and Skills Sub-Group was aimed at raising educational standards and better prepare the workforce for the needs of the District and widen participation. He added that he had not been Chair for long but received excellent support from Officers at the District Council who included John Murphy, Ray Brewis and Jane Bellis who had all been an asset to him.

(II) Where had the LSP been most and least effective so far?

M. Fallow explained that there had been some great successes. He referred to NEET which was young people who were Not in Employment, Education or Training and explained that two years ago this figure was in excess of 30%. This had now reduced significantly through a number of different initiatives. There were more modern apprenticeships in the District and there had been a big leap from compulsory education at sixteen. He explained that teaching people irrelevant subjects had been a big issue and there was a need to get groups to work closely with schools.

The fourteen to nineteen year old sector was taking part in vocational education and there was currently an initiative at Dalton Park where children were brought out of school on a regular basis for them to do relevant work related to their aspirational needs i.e. brick laying, hairdressing, retail etc. This initiative was to be officially opened the following week.

M. Fallow explained that adult education had suffered but this was a national problem as it was not the DFES's priority. A lot of work was done through the Acumen Trust, East Durham and Houghall Community College and other partners but there was a fear that this was slipping.

(III) Are the LSP Sub-Groups equally effective in terms of structure and outcomes?

M. Fallow explained that this was very difficult to answer. He was also a member of the Economy Sub-Group and he thought the Groups were equally as effective but could not evidence this.

(IV) **How does the LSP ensure that full benefits of sharing data and information between partners were obtained?**

M. Fallow explained that the Learning and Skills Group provided performance management updates. The Secretariat role was carried out by East Durham and Houghall Community College and he was familiar with the process. Statistical information was provided on a regular basis and he worked closely with other Implementation Groups on specific issues that were cross cutting.

(V) **What steps could the LSP take to ensure wider involvement in its work?**

M. Fallow explained that the District had a lot of community volunteers and the CEN were very much part of the process.

(VI) **The LSP should be accountable to the community for its work. How is accountability achieved, measured and reported back to the community? Was the membership of the LSP and its Sub Groups reflective of the community?**

M. Fallow explained that there were Members of the CEN on the LSP and they cascaded information back to the wider network.

(VII) **How effective was the LSP at communicating its achievements/non achievements?**

M. Fallow explained that there was room for improvement. The District Council did a very good job in InfoPoint and the LSP used the LSP TV. A lot of the public were not often aware that initiatives that were taking place were as a result of the LSP. The Dalton Park initiative was to be launched the following week and it would be explained that this was LSP driven and NRF supported.

(VIII) **What arrangements were in place within the Sub Group to report upon its activities and what were the reporting mechanisms for the Sub Group to the LSP?**

The Learning and Skills Sub Group had some responsibility for each age range. Sure-start was responsible for the early years, there were also representatives from Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, 14-19 year olds, further education and Lifelong Learning on the Sub Group who gave a report on their developments at every meeting and reported to the Executive.

(IX) **How effective was the LSP and the Sub Groups at raising awareness of its activities to partner organisations in the community?**

M Fallow explained that there was room for improvement. The LSP did a good job but felt that the Sub Groups needed to do better. Sub Groups needed to get better at promoting what they did.

APPENDIX C

A Member asked if the Local Education Authority was involved and how much involvement they had. M. Fallow explained that the previous Sub Group Chair was Neil Charlton who was the Deputy Director of Education at Durham County Council. Concern had been expressed that his withdrawal as Chair signalled a lesser involvement from Durham County Council and it was his job to make sure that that this did not happen. He added that he sat on the FEDs group which was made up of the six Head Teachers from the Secondary Schools and himself although this did not cover Primary Schools. There was concern that the creation of the new department at County Hall had left a void and he had written to Neil Charlton to ensure that there was a link.

A Member explained that he felt the least effective was adult education and the price of participation had quadrupled and thought this could be a deterrent. M Fallow explained that this was a reflection of the lack of government support. East Durham and Houghall Community College did have four full classes on the Access Course and this had reduced to one class that year. Political pressure needed to be applied nationally, if the workforce could not be educated then there was a problem. The Government were concentrating on 16-18 year olds and he felt the 19-90 year olds were being neglected.