



Core Group Minutes 28 April 2009

PRESENT

Mayors Dale Williams (Chair), Malcolm Macpherson, Penny Webster, Frana Cardno, Maureen Reynolds (Deputy Chair), Gary McPhee, Alistair Sowman, Brendan Duffy and Jono Naylor. Colin Drew (LGNZ liaison) and Jan Francis (MTFJ Executive Officer)

APOLOGIES

Mayors Bob Harvey, Kevin Winters, Len Brown, Les Probert, Malcolm Campbell, Peter Tennent, Tim Shadbolt, Tracy Hicks and Wayne Guppy.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

Passed as true and accurate record.

Moved – Malcolm Mcpherson

Seconded – Penny Webster

FINANCE

Financial report accepted.

Moved – Penny Webster

Seconded – Jono Naylor

Dale mentioned the cost of airfares for Jan when meetings are changed or at short notice. It was agreed that Jan could charge back any amount above the standard fare in those circumstances.

BUDGET

The draft budget was approved in principle, with Dale to approve the final draft when actuals were received at the end of the financial year.

Moved – Frana Cardno

Seconded – Jono Naylor

Jono noted that we were using retained earnings and would need a strategy to deal with the projected shortfall in the future.

STRATEGY

Jan would make changes as per the discussion on the job summit priority and re-circulate.

EDANZ ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

It was agreed to decline membership noting that most Councils could get the information via their respective EDA's.

CORE GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES

After discussion, it was agreed that the responsibilities noted in the discussion paper should be adopted and that the membership of the group should continue to be on a volunteer basis. All current members will be contacted by Dale to ascertain their commitment for the 2009-10 year and the group will be confirmed at the AGM at the LGNZ conference.

GENERAL BUSINESS

There was a discussion on the recession where mayors noted that unemployment was still low. Businesses were cautious particularly in the manufacturing sector. Some Mayors were facilitating meetings between businesses looking at how to share resources. The retail sector was feeling the down turn more than others at the moment and it was generally agreed that communities were not feeling the impacts yet. There was still quite a lot of work in many areas – some areas had had very good summer with internal tourism up. Mayors noted that there would be a critical point in the winter.

NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Core Group meeting will be advised once confirmation from the Minister's office is received.

OFFICIALS MEETING

Present

Mayors – Dale Williams (Chair), Malcolm Macpherson, Penny Webster, Frana Cardno, Maureen Reynolds, Gary McPhee, Alistair Sowman, Brendan Duffy, Jono Naylor.

Colin Drew (LGNZ liaison) and Jan Francis (MTFJ Executive Officer).

Officials – Catherine Nalty, Karen McKenzie, Charlotte de Feijter, Jerry Wilson and Tess Spence (MSD); Felicity Bollen (DoL); Richard Elwin (TEC); Roger Wigglesworth (MED); Andrea Schollmann and Graeme Marshall (MoE); Nita Kerepiti-Ikin (TPK) and Janet Brown (Career Services).

Apologies

Mayors – Bob Harvey, Kevin Winters, Len Brown, Les Probert, Malcolm Campbell, Peter Tennent, Tim Shadbolt, Tracy Hicks and Wayne Guppy.

Officials – Anne Pomeroy (DIA).

Dale Williams gave an update of the work the Taskforce had been doing since the beginning of the year. The Taskforce had been renewing partnerships, working on the updated MoU and the supporting action plan.

The Taskforce Core Group Mayors were working on the Job Summit priorities and would take the lead on developing ideas that could be implemented at the local level.

He noted that the recession was yet to be really felt in the regions but that youth unemployment was on the rise. He expressed the Mayors' concerns about youth funding and the viability of many of the programmes currently being funded by MSD. He told officials that there was a need for transitional funding while new funding arrangements were worked out.

The Taskforce was still keen to see YTS rolled out across TLA's and the need for stability for providers. It was not clear who was responsible for the 16-18 year age group but that group definitely needed support and that programmes delivering to that group needed sustainable funding.

Jerry Wilson noted that the commitment to the funding of YTS was there for the next financial year for all services currently operating. In order to increase the numbers around the country there would need to be an increase in the appropriation from government. He also said there had not been any blanket statement regarding funding for programmes to the under 18 age group. YTS went from 15-19 so could stay within MSD as the over 18 age group were clearly their clients. However there was a possibility that there may be a need to refocus where the programme sits best.

Andrea Schollmann spoke about the Youth Guarantee, noting that Ministers were considering the principles of the policy and what the first stage would be. It is likely to focus first on pastoral care and careers advice.

Mayors' spoke of their commitment to young people and programmes that were being delivered successfully in their communities, but that frustration could mean they would disengage if concerns were not acknowledged.

Catherine Nalty said it was difficult to guarantee anything right now but that Mayors should not feel officials were not committed to the Taskforce, noting the importance of the network was a clear directive from the Job Summit.

Karen McKenzie said she would take the transitional question to organisations and see if some arrangements could be made. In response to a question from Maureen Reynolds about agencies working collectively, she said that they were still working out how to work with the current Ministers, but collaborative action was important to officials.

Memorandum of Understanding

Dale expressed thanks for the work on the MoU particularly Charlotte de Feijter who had kept us informed and consulted on the drafts. It was pleasing to see that the document would be signed by Ministers, with an action plan signed off by the end of June.

Work and Income gave a presentation of the Job Support Scheme (9-day fortnight) which is *available from Jan* and on the website.

Frana Cardno noted that given the size of business eligible for the scheme it really wasn't relevant to small communities and Jono Naylor noted that many businesses were providing this kind of response themselves without government assistance.

Agency Updates

Ministry of Social Development

Working on seasonal work in conjunction with DoL. Malcolm Mcpherson noted that the old fashioned labour force has re-emerged but that the RSE scheme was still needed. The Taskforce could identify areas to liaise with. He was taking the lead on this work for the Taskforce. MSD were making the Job Matching Tool available to employers with the first stage being ready in June.

Te Puni Kokiri

The Ministry was continuing to support the Taskforce particularly with the partnership with Marcus. The Minister had also set up a Maori Economic Taskforce.

Ministry of Economic Development

Working with TLA's on the cycleway and waiting for funding decisions. Frana noted that there was a place for young people in building the trails - possibly even having the flexibility to complete apprenticeships. MED was also advancing some big projects in relation to infrastructure. Also looking at decreasing regulation compliance. There may also be some money for small business.

Tertiary Education Commission

There has been an increase in enrolments in tertiary institutions which has led to concerns from the Minister about the cap on funding and numbers currently in force. There has been an increase in the training subsidy, available through ITO's from 6 to 12 weeks. Also working on student summer employment which will be under pressure which in turn will have an affect on students ability to continue their study. Also working with international students.

With regard to trades and skills there is work looking at school based apprenticeships – up to 1 year so there would be an overlap with the trade qualification in ITO's. It is part of the policy to provide a bridge from secondary to tertiary education and training. There will be a number of Trades Academies established and TEC has asked for expressions to establish 5 academies by 2011.

Work is continuing in Manukau to look at dual enrolment and dual qualification between NZQA and industry.

In response to a question from Frana regarding alternative education, Graeme Marshall said the emphasis was on reducing the numbers of young people likely to be candidates for alternative education with money going into early intervention.

Career Services

Working on youth guarantee and careers advice and guidance within that policy. Increasing usage of the website and added a new My Career Space where people will be able to store their career information and update CV's etc. There is a pilot programme being run with UCOL to increase career literacy.

MINISTERS MEETING

Present

Mayors – Jono Naylor, Frana Cardno, Penny Webster, Dale Williams (Chair) , Maureen Reynolds (Deputy Chair), Malcolm Macpherson, Alistair Sowman, Gary McPhee and Jenny Brash.

Jan Francis (MTFJ Executive Officer).

Ministers – Hon Gerry Brownlee, Hon Tariana Turia, Hon Paula Bennett and Hon Anne Tolley.

Officials – A number of departmental and Ministerial officials attended the meeting.

Hon Paula Bennett and Mayor Dale Williams welcomed everyone to the meeting. Dale spoke of the focus from the meeting with the officials and reiterated that Mayors wanted to add value to officials work and to provide local solutions to local issues. Paula Bennett said the focus was on jobs and that the focus of the MoU was on intent. Young people must remain a focus.

Hon Anne Tolley noted the status of the Mayor was important in addressing issues locally, and it was important to widen opportunities for young people. It could be necessary to change the structure and widen the experience. Important to keep young people in education or training. She was impressed with Ka Hikitea and the Pacifica Education Strategy. She also commented on the Trades Academies. She believes there is a genuine desire for change from secondary schools. The Youth Guarantee would be aimed at those out of school but not engaged – the NEET people. The Job Summit had charged her with bringing the policy forward to 2010 from 2011. She was particularly looking for value for money from Polytechnic and PTE courses. Also looking for job training opportunities through the Wananga – particularly for literacy and numeracy and targeting boys and young men.

Hon Gerry Brownlee said it was important to line up economic development with growing the economy and saving jobs. Local Government was an essential part of this. Where local authorities decide to have a role and to develop the local economy significant progress can be made e.g. Wellington, Marlborough, Kaikoura.

The Government is looking at regulations and is hesitant to put in any new regulations. He wants an attitude of supporting investment. Small local initiatives which get things going are also successful e.g. Dunedin. These are specific, not one size fits all. We don't know where the current crisis is heading but we do know that two thirds of the world's wealth has been written off. One danger is for countries to over regulate the financial community.

Mayor Maureen Reynolds reiterated the local solutions and said she was heartened to hear the Minister note that one size doesn't fit all.

Hon Paula Bennett said there was a need to recognise the link between business, unemployment and central government.

Mayor Frana Cardno reiterated her concern about funding for young people in the under 18 age group and the apparent moving out of that area by MSD.

Mayor Jono Naylor noted that the partnerships had worked and while he realised that changes would be made by the new government, it was important not to throw the baby out with the bath water.

Hon Anne Tolley said that it was important for the government to work smarter – looking for outcomes, not looking to shift funding. Where programmes and projects were clearly working funding would continue and even increase in some instances.

Dale noted that there had been a commitment to roll out YTS to at least 10 a year and asked for some indication if this was likely to happen.

Paula noted that the situation was one of increased need and less money but youth are a priority.

Hon Tariana Turia noted that communities do have their own solutions and asked how engaged the Taskforce was with Maori and Pacific communities.

Mayors answered that there were many programmes in their communities and Brendan Duffy said that Life to the Max was an example of a whole of community response with collaboration between government agencies to ensure the programme's success. Dale noted that every community had examples and that Mayors were keen to take the lead on some of the Job Summit priorities. Tariana said she would be interested in information on the programmes and what was working well.

Brendan said that Ministers could see Mayors were passionate about their communities and genuinely wanted to work at a high level to develop a better understanding, better dissemination and better outcomes.

Mayor Jenny Brash said that there needed to be a push for local and central government contracts to contain training agreements. There was a model of how this could work with Housing NZ.

Hon Paula Bennett reiterated that the government would definitely back what works and that all the YTS initiatives she had visited were working well and delivering good programmes to the under 18 age group.