

## **REGENERATING RURAL COMMUNITIES BY FOCUSING ON SKILLS**

### **'THE SKILLS NEEDS OF THE RURAL WORKFORCE'**

IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT WHAT MOTIVATES RURAL INDUSTRIES TODAY –

#### **THE DRIVERS.**

UNDERSTANDING THESE SHOULD GIVE US POINTERS TO THE SORTS OF SKILLS PROVISION THAT MAY BE REQUIRED IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

THESE DRIVERS ARE VIRTUALLY THE SAME ACROSS THE TWO REGIONS AND NATIONALLY.

#### 1. CHANGES IN LAND MANAGEMENT POLICY WITHIN EU

NEW CAP REFORMS IMPLEMENTATION.  
ENVIRONMENTAL RULES RELATING TO LAND USE.  
GREEN ENERGY AND ITS RAW MATERIAL PRODUCTION.

#### 2. CHANGES IN BUSINESS PRACTICE DUE TO SUCH FACTORS AS:

GLOBALISATION AND THE EFFECTS OF MORE FOREIGN COMPETITION.  
TRACEABILITY - FOOD CHAIN PARTICULARLY.  
RAPID GLOBAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE.  
CLIMATE CHANGE - CAN WE CARRY ON AS BEFORE?

#### 3. IMPACT OF LEGISLATION BOTH EU AND LOCAL.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF STAFF  
ANIMAL WELFARE – QUITE FAR REACHING PROPOSALS, INCLUDING THE SUPPLY OF DRUGS.

#### 4. DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES.

THE AGEING WORKFORCE.  
THE EFFECT OF MIGRANT LABOUR.  
CAREER CHANGERS, JOB SWAPPERS. OLDER WORKERS CARRYING ON WORKING.

#### 5. RURAL AND URBAN REGENERATION PLANS.

PUBLIC ACCESS – AND ALL THAT IT ENTAILS.  
GREEN SPACES, PARKS AND OTHER 'OPEN' DEVELOPMENTS.  
THE OLYMPIC EFFECT – THE 'DRAW' OF LABOUR TOWARDS THE

CAPITAL MUST NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED, BUT THEN THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS MUST BE GRASPED. OVERALL CHANGES IN SOCIETY PARTICULARLY IN AREAS SUCH AS HOUSE BUILDING – AND ALL THE INFRA STRUCTURE THAT IT ENTAILS.

LANTRA HAS A VERY BROAD FOOT PRINT OF INDUSTRIES AND THE CHANGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ABOVE WILL HAVE FAR REACHING EFFECTS ON THE BUSINESSES AND WORKFORCE THAT WE HELP TO REPRESENT.

IF FOR A MOMENT WE THINK ABOUT **REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES** THERE ARE BROAD AREAS OF SIMILARITY. BOTH REGIONS FOLLOW OVERALL THEMES OF PROSPERITY, INCLUSIVITY, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY. SIGNIFICANT TO THIS THEME IS THAT EASTERN ENGLAND HAS LAND-BASED (PARTICULARLY FOOD PRODUCTION IN ITS ENTIRETY) AS A REGIONAL PRIORITY – WHEREAS THE EAST MIDLANDS ONLY SEES IT AS A GOAL ON A COUNTY OR LOCAL BASIS.

THIS BRINGS US ROUND TO OUR BUSINESSES AND THEIR **PRESENT UPTAKE OF TRAINING**.

OUR **RESEARCH** DEPARTMENT HAVE SENT ME A **CAVEAT** ON THE DANGER OF COMPARING AREAS - WHEN THE RESEARCH MAY HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT BY DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS AT DIFFERENT TIMES. SO IF YOU AREA STATISTICIAN LOOK AWAY NOW!

BOTH REGIONS HAVE SOMEWHERE **OVER 90%** OF BUSINESSES THAT EMPLOY **LESS THAN 10 PEOPLE**, SO THEY FIT THE MICRO TO SME CATEGORY - AND IT SEEMS THAT OVERALL THE TURNOVER IS LESS, ON AVERAGE PER BUSINESS IN THE EAST MIDLANDS, THAN EAST ANGLIA.

INTERESTINGLY **HALF AND ABOVE** OF ALL BUSINESSES CARRY OUT SOME FORM OF **GENERAL TRAINING EVERY YEAR** – WHICH IS A GOOD SIGN.

ALSO **30%** AND ABOVE SEND STAFF ON **SPECIFIC TRAINING COURSES EVERY YEAR**.

UP TO £500 PER TIME IS SPENT ON THESE COURSES PER EMPLOYEE.

SO TO SOME EXTENT WE **COULD BE PUSHING ON AN OPEN DOOR!**

WHAT DO THEY RECOGNISE AS THE **KEY TRAINING CHALLENGES** AT THE MOMENT?

BOTH REGIONS CLEARLY SHOW THAT 80% OF BUSINESSES SEE LITERACY AND NUMERACY AS THE NUMBER 1 DEFICIENCY.

AS ANY TRAINER KNOWS **BASIC LIFE SKILLS** SUCH AS THESE ARE ABSOLUTELY **VITAL** TO ANY OTHER SORT OF INSTRUCTION. DISTURBING THOUGH THIS FIGURE IS IT IS OBVIOUSLY A KEY CHALLENGE FOR THE WHOLE TRAINING AGENDA.

**NEXT** IN LINE CAME **COMMUNICATION SKILLS** – CAN WE SURMISE THIS IS AS A RESULT OF EXPANDING HORIZONS FOR PRODUCTS AND FIRMS FEEL THEIR STAFF ARE UNABLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES CONFIDENTLY IN THE MARKET PLACE?

**TECHNICAL SKILLS** VIED FOR THIRD PLACE WITH **MARKETING SKILLS** BUT AGAIN IT GIVES US AN OVERALL FLAVOUR OF WHAT INDUSTRY REQUIRES.

MORE **COMPREHENSIVE FIGURES** ARE AVAILABLE IN THE **REGIONAL SSA's** IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO STUDY MORE CLOSELY.

BUSINESSES ALSO SAW AN **INCREASE TO INTERMEDIATE OR HIGH** LEVEL FOR THE ABOVE SKILLS OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS.

HOWEVER WE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO TRY AND EQUATE THESE STATEMENTS TO NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS AS IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO ACCURATELY GET THAT LEVEL OF DETAIL IN THE RESEARCH.

CERTAINLY IT IS IMPORTANT TO GRASP THAT EMPLOYERS **DO NOT CONSIDER** THAT THE **GENERAL LEVEL** OF THEIR EMPLOYEES, OR THEIR OWN SKILLS, IS UP TO THE TASK AHEAD. THIS NOTION COVERED VIRTUALLY ALL SKILLS-SETS.

BOTH REGIONS REPORTED A **PERCEIVED NEED FOR MARKETING, CUSTOMER CARE, RETAILING, TOURISM SKILLS**, IMPROVED ICT AND DIVERSIFICATION.

THESE TENDED TO BE SUBJECTS THAT THEY THOUGHT WOULD BE NEEDED AT HIGHER LEVELS i.e. LEVEL 3 AND UP OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS.

### **DELIVERY OF THIS TRAINING.**

A COMMON THREAD OF VIRTUALLY ALL SKILLS AGENDA'S IS THAT IT MUST BE DELIVERED IN A WAY THAT EMPOLYERS, AND INDEED EMPLOYEES, WOULD LIKE .

I KNOW THAT SOME OF YOU WILL HAVE HEARD THE NEXT COMMENTS BEFORE, BUT THEY COME UP TIME AND AGAIN WHEN TALKING TO BUSINESSES ABOUT PROVISION.

1. THEY LIKE **BITE-SIZED COURSES**.
2. THEY LIKE WORK-BASED TRAINING (I.E. **ON THE JOB TRAINING**)
3. DON'T NECESSARILY WANT QUALIFICATIONS, LIKE **EXPERIENCE TYPE COURSES** WITH A CERTIFICATE.
4. WOULD LIKE A **FRAMEWORK OF EXPERIENCE** TO BUILD ON, WHERE UNITS ADDED UP TO A QUALIFICATION.
5. PREFER **WORK RELATED LEARNING EVEN AT HIGHER LEVELS**, E.G. DIPLOMA AND FOUNDATION DEGREE TYPE OF PROVISION.

IT IS VERY **IMPORTANT** TO TAKE **INDUSTRY'S VIEWS** INTO ACCOUNT IF WE ARE TO INCREASE THE UPTAKE OF LEARNING AND DRIVE FORWARD THE RURAL WORKFORCE.

FOR THIS REASON WE WOULD LIKE AS **MANY KEY STAKEHOLDERS** AS POSSIBLE **TO COMMENT** ON THE SECTOR SKILLS AGREEMENTS SO THAT THEY WILL BECOME HIGH VALUE DOCUMENTS THAT HELP SHAPE FUTURE LEARNING AND FUNDING IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY.

IF THIS IS ACHIEVED IT WILL HAVE **MANY LONG-TERM** BUSINESS AND SOCIAL **BENEFITS** FOR OUR RURAL POPULATIONS.

THANK-YOU.