

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 30 January 2007
Subject Council Meeting
Location UNISON Regional Office
Time 16:00
LSC office Nottinghamshire
Publication intent Internal

Present: Keith Stanyard
Stuart Anthony
Mick Brown
Graham Chapman
Elaine Clark
Milton Crosdale
Chris Hasty
Barbara McKenna
David Sadler
Mick Storey
Deborah White

LSC Staff: Nigel Jackson
Terry Laws
Paula Webber
Kathy White

Apologies: Sarah Bartlett
Angela Bright
Roger Hursthouse
Jon McLeod
Jean Pardoe
Tom Stockwell
Pat Woodfield

Item 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
The Chairman welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

Item 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
As above.

Item 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December were agreed as a true record.

Item 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Item 3.2: Regional Capital Group – David Sadler reported that he had not yet received notification of any meetings.

Action: Mick Brown to follow up with Andrew Martin

Item 4.2: N&S/Lincoln College Merger - Keith Stanyard confirmed that, following the laying of the order in Parliament, approval has been given to the merger of the two colleges. The Chairman thanked Council members for their contribution towards the process.

Item 4.7: Nottingham Refugee Network

(Deborah White declared an interest as a member of the Refugee Forum).

Deborah White requested background information on the situation which led to a protest march on 8 December. Mick Brown explained that this was largely a result of Home Office policy. ESOL funding will no longer be available for those people who are seeking asylum and fee remission will only be available for those in receipt of benefits.

Item 6.2: Reducing the Number of 16 Year Olds in NEET group –

Referring to the shortage of employment opportunities for young people, Graham Chapman commented that 59% of young people enter employment and, in his opinion, this was a performance rather than a labour market issue. Terry Laws advised that research was currently being undertaken in relation to the increase in European nationals working in the UK and possible impact upon training and job opportunities. Graham Chapman requested performance figures on an individual agency basis.

Action: Terry Laws to provide this information for the next meeting

Item 11: Event for Non Executive LSC Members – Formal invitations have now been sent out to Council members and 350 people are expected to attend this event at the Guildhall on 7 March.

Item 5: AREA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Planning and Allocations: Despite a 6.7% increase in funding for the region in 2007/08, current discussions around the regional

allocation would lead to a shortfall of approx. £2m in respect of 2006/07 volumes.

In response to a question from Milton Crosdale regarding the rationale for this, Mick Brown replied that this was due to high levels of growth in 16-18 learner numbers in the region, a significant reduction in the adult funding budget and the way allocations have been determined. The LSC has already agreed to give colleges a 3.7% increase in rates per student. The adult 'non priority' budget will be distributed 50% on a historical basis and the remaining 50% on the basis of need. These combined elements have resulted in an overall increase of only 2% for Nottinghamshire LSC.

Mick Brown commented that although the Nottinghamshire rate per 16-18 year old is very efficient, participation is lower than elsewhere in the East Midlands and the situation could not be improved without additional funding. Nottinghamshire LSC and the East Midlands region as a whole is continuing to exert pressure for additional funding. The position on allocations is expected to be finalised at the RMT meeting on 8 February.

Action: Keith Stanyard to email the Regional Director expressing the concerns of Council members and suggesting that all East Midlands offices receive 4% funding as a minimum.

Capital: Mick Brown tabled a paper providing details of current capital projects and their status.

Graham Chapman asked who would be responsible for 14-19 year olds in terms of the interface between school capital and FE capital plans and requested that an element of FE capital is included for BSF projects. MB commented that, in the £80m estimate for Castle College for example, he would expect there to be an element for 14-19 year olds. He went on to point out that there is no access to the LSC schools 16-19 capital fund for BSF areas such as Nottingham city.

David Sadler asked if the college's capital proposals were congruent with the plans for schools. Graham Chapman suggested that the LSC and City Council develop a 'blue print' providing a shared vision for schools and colleges to work towards. Mick Brown advised that he would expect the strategic framework to address some of these issues.

Referring to a situation with derelict land near to North Nottinghamshire College, Mick Storey questioned the extent of

Nottinghamshire LSC's involvement in college plans. Keith Stanyard replied that over the past year Nottinghamshire LSC has been trying to influence college capital plans and acknowledged that all Council members should be aware of these issues which have been discussed at FE sub committee meetings.

Action: Kathy White to circulate copies of previous FE Committee minutes.

Graham Chapman requested that the paper be updated to include a section on South Nottingham College.

Keith Stanyard drew attention to a letter recently received from David Kissman (Chair, Castle College) requesting a more comprehensive framework.

Performance Information: Bilborough College and High Pavement – Mick Brown advised that the two institutions were not strictly comparable as Bilborough is an independent 6th form college and High Pavement is part of NCN. Keith Stanyard suggested it would be useful to have this type of information available for all institutions across the county together with performance figures for previous years.

Staffing and Accommodation: MB advised that Nottinghamshire LSC is now almost at full strength in terms of staffing levels.

A property at Castle Marina has been identified as suitable for Nottinghamshire LSC's requirements. Mick Brown and members of the management team will view the property on 7 February.

Item 6. Action Points from the Council Away Day

Paula Webber referred to the very productive discussion at the Away Day which helped to shape the local plan and highlighted the action points which Council members expressed an interest in supporting. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- Train to gain – performance will be reviewed regularly
- table of capital projects will be updated on a regular basis
- the situation in terms of improving the provision of education and training in Newark will continue to be tracked

- development and progress of both Skills Boards will be reviewed and Council members kept informed
- the progress of equality and diversity considerations will continue to be monitored. Paula Webber acknowledged that the first version of the Local Annual Plan was lacking in this area and this would be rectified
- aim to ensure that colleges are financially secure and working in conjunction with the strategic framework
- ensure that local influence and needs continue to be brought to attention
- 4pm Council pre meeting sessions to continue to aid understanding
- produce an end of term report that reflects the work of the Council year on year until the Council ceases to exist.

Council members agreed to include the Local Annual Plan in the schedule of action points.

Keith Stanyard drew attention to the timelines for establishing the new Regional Council. The closing date for applications is 18 May and appointments announced by the end of September. All regional councils are expected to be in place by mid October.

The Chairman also referred to a letter recently received from Cathy Robinson (Council solicitor) concerning membership of local councils and quoracy of meetings. Keith Stanyard recommended and Council members agreed, to adopt the action points as the Council's agenda over the forthcoming months.

Stuart Anthony requested that reference as to how the LSC could work more closely with the voluntary sector was included and how the Council could assist the partnership to develop.

Action: Mick Brown to consider this issue prior to the next meeting

Item 7. Leitch Report – Presentation

Nigel Jackson gave a presentation on the Leitch Review of Skills highlighting the key messages and actions that need to be taken

between now and 2020. The report focuses predominantly on upskilling adults and recommends the implementation of some very stretching targets. In discussion, the following points were noted:

- 'voluntarism' for level 2 activity until 2010 but maybe a statutory requirement for employers to contribute thereafter if progress is considered too slow
- no radical structural changes anticipated for the LSC and JC
- a network of Employment and Skills Boards to be established with the aim of attracting more employers. The Greater Nottingham Skills Board would be renamed the Employment and Skills Board

Stuart Anthony asked if Nottinghamshire LSC had any existing partnership agreements that are close to achieving the vision. Nigel Jackson replied that Nottinghamshire LSC has extensive links with Job Centre Plus including a joint action and delivery plan and would also expect the LSC to have the same commissioning framework as Job Centre Plus in the near future.

The Leitch report also emphasises the importance of Train to Gain. Nigel Jackson reported that both regionally and nationally this initiative was receiving good publicity but unfortunately, Nottinghamshire LSC was behind target and, as a consequence, has urged EMB to allocate additional brokers to the area.

Elaine Clark registered an interest as a WBL provider

In response to a query from Elaine Clark regarding the lack of progress by the Food and Drink Forum, Nigel Jackson advised that the Forum had decided not to engage until the Train to Gain contract was signed.

Keith Stanyard requested that the Council's thanks were passed on to WNC for their swift start on Train to Gain.

Action: Terry Laws

Action: Keith Stanyard to email the Regional Director expressing concerns regarding the inadequacy of the available data.

Action: Mick Brown to arrange a meeting with Karen Woodward to discuss in more detail.

Item 9. LOCAL AREA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Council members were asked to consider the latest version of the local area implementation plan. Comments from the discussion at the Council away day and by the management team have now been incorporated. Mick Brown advised that figures could not be included until allocations have been finalised. The plan is to be endorsed by Council members prior to submission to the Regional Board on 14 March.

In response to a question from Milton Crosdale regarding the extent of consultation, Mick Brown advised that the plan had been circulated widely to key stakeholders and responses had been incorporated.

Taking each of the Priorities contained within the plan in turn, the following points were noted:

Priority 1: Key actions, bullet point 2 - to be amended to reflect the previous discussion on 16-19.

Priority 2: Key actions, bullet point 2 - Keith Stanyard enquired what action had been taken regarding the employer event in April 2007. Terry Laws replied that plans were underway and he would check if invitations had been sent out. Keith Stanyard requested that this matter was given some urgency.

Action: Terry Laws to check if invitations have been sent

Bullet point 5 – Mick Brown advised that Nottinghamshire LSC was one of two learner account pilots in the East Midlands. Very few details are available as yet in terms of the mechanisms and how the pilots will be funded. One option currently being reviewed would be to part fund the pilot from Nottinghamshire LSC's funding allocation. Council members expressed concerns that this would further adversely impact Nottinghamshire's allocation. The pilot will focus on the unemployed and those in disadvantaged wards.

Action: Keith Stanyard to convey these concerns to the Regional Director.

Priority 3: Key actions bullet point 1 - Terry Laws advised that the Strategic framework for the county should be ready earlier than September and this date would be revised.

Regional objectives bullet point 1 - Change to read "rated as at least good by 2008".

In response to a question from Elaine Clark regarding the new quality standards, Mick Brown advised that reference to the new standards would be included in the more detailed plan.

Priority 4: Key actions bullet point 2 - Graham Chapman requested the inclusion of Making the Connection under this point.

A meeting of the Council to endorse the plan will be held on 6 March, 8am at Castle Marina.

Item 10. Agenda for Change Theme 7 Update

Deborah White referred to a meeting held on 19 January. The general conclusion was that the process had not been well managed nationally but had worked well locally resulting in several promotions and an improvement in the gender balance. In terms of ethnicity, Nottinghamshire LSC now has only two members of staff from the BME group from a total of 34. Two BME staff previously located at Nottinghamshire LSC have transferred to regional office roles.

Flexible working was discussed although there has been no formalisation of this process.

All staff at B3 have been provided with a comprehensive training programme which is very positive.

Deborah White proposed the dissolution of the Theme 7 group to the Council. Keith Stanyard wished to place on record his thanks to Deborah White and other members of the Theme 7 sub group for their involvement.

Item 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Pay Settlement – Keith Stanyard referred to the 2006 pay settlement which has not yet been agreed however the LSC has taken the decision to implement this on the basis of the offer made.

MB drew attention to the PCS strike which was due to take place on 31 January and the likelihood that this would impact on the Nottinghamshire office.

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on 6 March, 8am at Castle Marina.
(This is a special meeting to ratify the annual plan).

21 March, 4pm at B&Q, Manton Wood.