

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 29 March 2006
Subject Council Meeting
Location Leicestershire LSC
Time 15:00
LSC office Leicestershire
Publication intent Internal

Present Maureen Milgram Forrest (Chair)
Maggie Galliers
Chris Hall
Ann Height
Mir Juma
Mark Mabey
Barry Martin
David Nelson
Pravin Parmar
Mukesh Patel
Les Price

**Partner Members
In attendance** Rosemary Beard - Connexions
Garry Bryant - GO:EM
Jim Connelly- Jobcentre Plus
Mike Jewitt - Business Link
Sheila Lock - Leicester City Council
Gareth Williams - Leicestershire County Council

LSC staff Di Bentley
Mary Rogers
Maureen Danvers (minutes)

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Parvin Ali
Debbie Fern

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed Sheila Lock to her first meeting.

Item 2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting of 25 January 2006 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2.2 Item 3 - The Executive Director updated Council Members on the situation with regard to Gateway College's capital proposal. Following the Council meeting on 25 January, the Executive Director and Professor Bentley had extensive discussions with Mr Goffin. The Executive Director and the Chair had also met with the Principal and Chair of Governors of Regent College. Finally the Executive Director had spoken with the Principal of Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College and the Chair had visited the college. Verity Bullough, Regional Director, expressed her support for the decision to move to a feasibility study and subsequently progressed discussions with Gateway. The college has now largely completed its Approval in Principle documentation with our support. Consultants have been appointed to carry out the feasibility study and a report is expected to the LSC by 2 May and to Council by 5 May. Ms Galliers declared an interest in the item and said that she understood that there was still a feeling at Gateway that things had not been conducted in a sufficiently collaborative way.

Item 3. Feedback from Audit Committee

- 3.1 The Executive Director summarised the content of the meeting that had taken place earlier that day.
- 3.2 Risk management was reviewed. This is now an embedded process for senior management and the Audit Committee were very encouraged by the arrangements now in place.
- 3.3 An update was received from the regional Provider Financial Assurance (PFA) team. Some concerns were raised about the capacity of the regional function to discharge those visits necessary to give the appropriate level of assurance. The Committee were given reasonable assurance that this will be adequate.
- 3.4 A report was received from the Internal Audit team which was largely positive and showed improvement against several areas since previous recommendations were made.
- 3.5 The Statement of Internal Control was discussed. On the basis of the end of year Internal Audit report, the Committee felt that the Executive Director is in a position to sign this statement when it is time to do so. Mr Mabey and the Audit Committee Chair, Mr Parmar, paid tribute to the good level of financial control arrangements in place.

Item 4. The Youth Agenda – Briefing and Discussion

- 4.1 Presentations on the Children and Young People's Plans for the City and the County were received from Mr Williams and Ms Lock and on NEET (Not in Employment, Education and Training) from Ms Beard.
- 4.2 Mr Williams gave the background to the Plan for the County. This was agreed by the full County Council the previous week and a final version is currently being printed and can be circulated to Council Members in due course. Three core targets are to raise children's achievement from above average to well above average, looking at teaching and learning across the piece and assessing leadership and management capacity in county schools.

Two services (social care and children's services) are now working together as one department.

- 4.3 Ms Lock then summarised the position in the City. A key issue is the cultural shifts that are required to focus holistically on children's needs. The City plan has also recently been signed off. There are 14 key priorities with a strong emphasis on raising attainment and achievement of young people and on picking up those young people that "fall off the margins". Ms Lock flagged up the fact that there is no new money available and so budgets will have to be allocated differently.
- 4.4 Ms Beard said that Connexions' target is to reduce the number of NEET from 7.4% to 6.7% between November 2004 and November 2006. NEET is currently going up but that is to be expected at this time of year although the increase is more than would normally be expected. Ms Beard summarised the reasons why the figures are increasing and there is an element of mismatch between provision and young people seeking opportunities. Ms Beard went on to outline what Connexions is doing to reduce NEET and how this is an issue for all of those working with young people.
- 4.5 Mr Hall asked whether more work experience could help. Mr Williams said this would be very welcome and undertook to share models of best practice from employers in the county. Mr Martin said that insuring young people on work experience is difficult. Ms Rogers will discuss the issue of insurance with Barbara Chantrill of the Education Business Company as it will be something of which they have experience.
- 4.6 Mr Bryant felt it was important to get employers and schools talking and particularly about making the curriculum one which can benefit employers. The Chair felt this would be worth bearing in mind when appointing school governors.
- 4.7 Ms Lock stressed that there needs to be collective ownership of the responsibility for young people and the baton of care needs to be safely passed from one organisation to another.
- 4.8 Ms Galliers felt that a strategic discussion rather than random conversations needs to be had between Connexions and the LSC on key policy drivers.
- 4.9 Mr Juma said there was a need to arrest the drop out rate where it starts. He also added that enterprise was an option that was often missed.
- 4.10 The Executive Director said that it was important not to create an alternative to the Children and Young People's Plans but to embed our efforts in those strategies.
- 4.11 In terms of a solution, Mr Price suggested that a Task and Finish group of the council could be set up to discuss the 14-19 agenda. It was agreed that Ms Beard, Mr Williams and Ms Lock advise who should be on this group as well as its agenda and terms of reference. Barbara Chantrill was suggested as a good member for this group. Mr Bryant would also like the new Children's Services Officer for GO:EM to attend once that person is appointed.

Item 5. Activity Targets for the 2006/7 Plan for Leicestershire

- 5.1 The annual plan has now been approved and a copy of the latest version is enclosed with these minutes.
- 5.2 Professor Bentley outlined the targets that have been allocated to Leicestershire. The target causing most concern is that for full level 2 achievements where a large increase is expected.
- 5.3 Ms Galliers said that to deliver this level of Level 2s will completely distort the curriculum for Leicester and other colleges and it is important that this message is passed on.

Decision: Council Members agreed with the recommendation in the paper but expressed concern over the Level 2 targets as discussed and wished for this message to be passed on.

Item 6. Forward Planning and Governance

- 6.1 Dates of meetings as shown in the paper were amended during the meeting and the revised dates will be issued to Council Members separately.
- 6.2 Mr Hall has agreed to chair the capital sub-group. Volunteers were requested for this group and meetings of this group will be arranged once membership has been confirmed.
- 6.3 The first Task and Finish Group will be 14-19.
- 6.4 The Chair added that council membership is being reviewed and interviews will take place shortly for local authority vacancies. Applicants are still required for the sixth form secondary head position. A representative of a large employer is also desirable.
- 6.5 The Chair took the opportunity to mention that Mr Parmar's term of office has now expired and Mr Parmar has chosen not to re-apply. The Chair thanked Mr Parmar for the work done during his tenure and in particular as Chair of the Audit Committee.

Item 7. Executive Director's Report

- 7.1 The Executive Director drew the attention of members to the part of the Education White Paper where DfES has required Chris Banks, national LSC Chair, to look at governance arrangements for the 47 local Councils.
- 7.2 The Executive Director said that announcements would be made the following day concerning senior local and regional posts. This would be communicated to Council Members as soon as possible.
- 7.3 Improvements in workbased learning achievements continue to be made and we are doing well in relation to targets.
- 7.4 The Council congratulated Ms Galliers on Leicester College's strong inspection results.

Item 8. Chair's Report

- 8.1 The Chair thanked Council Members for their good wishes following her recent operation.

Item 9. Feedback from Partner Members

- 9.1 **Garry Bryant – Government Office:** Mr Bryant drew Members' attention to a report published on the state of English cities. Leicester is shown as 44/56 cities in terms of the measurement of gross value added from 1995 – 2002. A chart is attached to these minutes and information can also be accessed on the treasury website (www.hmtreasury.gov.uk/budget). There has been a fundamental review of GOs and their purpose. There is a move to a more strategic role. There will be a 33% staff reduction over the next 2 years.
- 9.2 **Jim Connelly – Jobcentre Plus:** Jobcentre Plus reorganisation will be complete w/c 3 April. The consultation on the Green Paper New Deal for Welfare ends on 21 April. The Government's aim is to get 1 million people currently on sickness or incapacity benefit back into employment. Government is expecting proposals in May. Mr Connelly asked if at a future Council meeting he could give more information on this consultation.
- 9.3 **Rosemary Beard – Connexions:** A response to the Green Paper Youth Matters has been issued.
- 9.4 **Mike Jewitt – Business Link:** The Council extended their congratulations to Mr Jewitt on being part of the consortium that won the Train to Gain bid. This consortium – East Midlands Business Ltd – has also been shortlisted for the regional IDB service (the regional Business Link contract). The outcome will be known on 31 March.

Item 10. Date and time of next meeting

- 10.1 The next formal meeting will be on 17 May at 3pm (not 31 May as previously advised).

Meeting chair	Maureen Milgram Forrest
Minute taker	Maureen Danvers
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