

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 28 March 2006
Subject Suffolk LSC Council Meeting
Location Felaw Maltings, 42 Felaw Street, Ipswich
Time 16:00
LSC office Suffolk
Publication intent Internal

Present

- Tony Preston - Chair
- Nick Foster – Executive Director
- Hamil Clarke
- Johanna Finn
- Greg Grant
- Caroline Gumble
- Tony Lewis
- Jonathan Moore
- Dave Müller
- Richard Nicol
- Patricia O'Brien
- Bryony Rudkin
- Ashley Seaborne
- Anne Swietlik
- Madeleine Vigar
- Annette Whybrow
- Brendan Loughran – Observer, Connexions
- Mervyn Stokes – Observer, Go East
- David Thornton – Observer, Suffolk County Council

In attendance

- Judith Mobbs - 14 Strategy manager
- Bill Goodwin - Project Consultant - School Organisation Review

LSC staff

- John McLeod
- Kay Phillips
- Jane Cattermole

Apologies

Apologies have been received from:

- Tina Ellis – Observer, Jobcentre Plus
- Peter Button – Observer, Business Link

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 The Chair relayed apologies as listed overleaf.

Item 2. Minutes of last meeting

Action: The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to the renaming of the Lowestoft Urban Regeneration Company at minute 8.6 to the Lowestoft *and* Great Yarmouth Urban Regeneration Company.

Item 3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Minute 5.5 Projects for 19+ learners had been included in the latest ESF prospectus, but did not specify LLDD.
- 3.2 Minute 8.3-8.9 The Chairman referred to the regional plan which members were welcome to have a copy of.
- 3.3 Minute 4.4 West Suffolk College's capital scheme had been discussed at a regional level and the college had been recommended to go for 60% funding at the next phase.

Item 4. Expanding Horizons 14-19: county plan for New Models of Learning & Infrastructure

- 4.1 The Chair welcomed Judith Mobbs, 14-19 Strategy Manager and congratulated her on the excellent work being done by the 14-19 team.
- 4.2 Judith referred to the circulated paper and gave a powerpoint presentation about Expanding Horizons 14-19, which would be launched in June 2006 and was theme 4 of the 14-19 strategy.

Action: It was suggested the 14-19 team should investigate transport options with UCS, also considering the extended schools agenda.

- 4.3 Bryony Rudkin explained that the EEDA board had had similar discussions regarding transport issues, but that it was proving difficult to get any organisation to take responsibility for the problem.
- 4.4 All-through schooling was proposed and welcomed for Haverhill. The Haverhill Learning Partnership had been formed to investigate the proposal which was resulting in a lot of research, as there were only approximately 22 all-through schools in the country. The concept of all-through schooling was popular as it raised aspiration and offered huge opportunities for different working practices.

Action: Summaries of 3 all-through schooling models would be circulated to Council Members.

- 4.5 Members recognised that the all-through schooling proposal would be of interest to the DfES. Tony Lewis registered an interest as member of the management committee of Westbridge pupil referral unit and highlighted the importance of the 14 pathways to the school, as they would offer important alternatives to the mainstream GCSE routes.

- 4.6 Following a query, Judith agreed to make it clearer in the document that Westbourne High School and Westbridge pupil referral unit's involvement and contribution to the locality groups.
- 4.7 Members were reassured that the locality groups had taken account of the investment being made in Suffolk College. The capacity issues that would be faced in trying to deliver 14 lines of learning with current FE facilities was elaborated on – it was highlighted that the current post-16 participation rate in most of Ipswich was 65%, which needed to be raised to 86%.
- 4.8 Dave Müller registered a conflict of interest as Principal of Suffolk College. Clarification was requested regarding the difference between endorsing and agreeing the plan. Enhancing AS levels and access to HE were highlighted as gaps in the market, as opposed to vocational and academic subjects. Concern was raised in regard to the SW Ipswich locality group's proposals that just because a provider was involved in a 14-19 meeting did not automatically mean that they approved of the actions resulting from the meeting.
- 4.9 It was clarified that the LSC expected the vocational lines of learning to become part of the standard school curriculum and did not accept that Suffolk College had the capacity to cope with that demand. Members were told that in regard to SW Ipswich (as with many other locality groups) a Curriculum Planning Group would agree the location of provision, ensuring against unhelpful duplication or competition.
- 4.10 Ashley Seaborne registered a conflict of interest as governor of Hadleigh High School. Following a query regarding cross border duplication, Members were reassured that this was being addressed in the locality groups and by discussions between LSC colleagues in Essex, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, but that the groups were progressing at different rates.
- 4.11 The plan was clarified as an outline not a blue print.
- 4.12 Dave Müller, Richard Nicol, Tony Lewis, Hamil Clarke and Madeleine Vigar all registered conflicts of interest.

Action: Council approved themes A-F, but agreed that any structural developments be brought separately to Council for approval.

(Greg Grant left the meeting)

Item 5. Policy Development Review

- 5.1 Bill Goodwin joined the meeting and tabled papers on the School Organisation review.
- 5.2 Some of the reasons for the review were highlighted; pupil performance, rates of participation and standards at 14-19. There was also evidence that pupils in two tier schools performed better than those in 3 tier schools, which were nationally in decline.
- 5.3 It was clarified that although the review was looking at structures, it was focussing on the needs of children.
- 5.4 Contrary to popular belief, the review was not primarily looking at Middle Schools, nor any individual school, but about policy.

- 5.5 A consultation document would be released in April for key partners to comment on. Members were reminded that the review could bring about wholesale changes to school structures in Suffolk and that the DfES would be keen to make sure it had a successful outcome.
- 5.6 Judith confirmed that the 14-9 strategy team and PDR were working closely together to make sure timescales dovetailed. Members' attention was drawn to the annexes which showed the wide ranging stakeholder group.

(David Thornton joined the meeting)

- 5.7 Judith confirmed that business leaders would be included in the consultation process.
- 5.8 Members were told that feedback to Cabinet may not take place until December/January because of the volume of business. The process was recognised as being complex because curriculum, teaching, support and physical resources have to be considered alongside analysis of past, current and potential school performance.

Item 6. Competition for 16-19 SW Ipswich Centre

- 6.1 Nick referred to the paper, highlighting the background to the proposal and the procedure for the competition process. Council were taken through the tabled, updated timetable.

Action: Suffolk LSC Council would determine the winner of the competition at an additional Council meeting to take place before Christmas.

- 6.2 The centre is due to open in September 2009, offering primarily sixth form provision and some of the 14 lines of learning – in partnership with Suffolk College.
- 6.3 Members stated the need to make sure that information to the Press was managed to try to pre-empt and limit misconception. This was indeed being worked on with the County Council.

(Bryony Rudkin left the meeting)

- 6.4 Members commented that students didn't appear to be involved in the process and that the provider of the site would be very influential which was why it was important to have a number of site options to consider.
- 6.5 Members asked that it be clarified in the statement and notice that it was intended that the centre would result in a radical improvement of sixth form and an *expansion of* vocational provision.
- 6.6 After discussion, Members clarified that Members of the stakeholder group would, by their very nature, have a stake in the outcome of the project, but not a vested interest. An audit trail would be in place as the process would be open to scrutiny.
- 6.7 The proposal would need to address the possible partnerships or working arrangements with current providers.

Decision: Members approved the initiation of the competition.

Decision: Members approved the revised timeline.

Action: It was agreed that the proposed composition of the local stakeholder panel would be worked on further and brought back to May meeting.

Decision: Council agreed to delegate to the 14-19 Strategy group, via the Executive Director, the authorisation of the statement of need, the competition notice and the judgement criteria.

(Tony Lewis and Judith Mobbs left the meeting)

Item 7. Chairman's Update

7.1 The Chairman updated Members about the regional chair appointment process and that his current tenure as local Chairman was due to expire at the end of June. However, the Regional Director was keen for the Chairman to extend his contract for up to 1 year, to oversee the changes taking place under Theme 7, and this proposal was being put to the Secretary of State for approval.

7.2 The Chairman discussed his involvement in the Theme 7 recruitment process to date.

Action: It was agreed that Members would be kept advised of all appointments that would affect the Council.

7.3 The Chairman announced that Dave Müller would be standing down as FE representative at the end of May and that the vacancy would be advertised shortly.

7.4 Council discussed how the changes under Theme 7 might affect them.

Action: Once more appointments had been made, Council would consider requesting quarterly reports from region as a form of accountability.

(Brendan Loughran left the meeting)

7.5 Members praised Suffolk LSC employees for continuing to do their jobs well and conduct themselves with dignity during the Theme 7 process, which Members attributed to the support staff were getting from the executive.

Item 8. Executive Director's Report

8.1 Nick Foster went through his report including a highlighting Theme 7 and 14-19 update, ESF funding and priorities for FE College planning for 2006/07. The closure of several IT centres was highlighted, which had resulted in a number of letters from MPs. Courses, including modern languages, were being cut to adapt to the priorities which were tending to impact on adults.

8.2 A lot of funding was available for SMEs, especially in construction sector, because of the Olympics, but Members recognised that it was a case of making businesses aware that the training was available. Members were updated that Train for Gain would help impart this type of funding to employers via brokers. However, after discussion, Members highlighted that the funding would require employers to take the initiative to approach

providers, as opposed to providers putting on courses and waiting for enrolments.

- 8.3 Attention was drawn to the tabled Executive Summary of the FE White Paper launched 27th March. In brief, an entitlement would now be offered for Level 3 for up to 25 year olds, schools and colleges would now be on a more equal footing concerning capital funding and specialisms would now be applied to colleges as well as schools.

Action: It was agreed that the FE White Paper would be discussed in more detail at the May Council meeting.

- 8.4 Suffolk College had received a very satisfactory inspection, with Grade 1 awarded in Care.
- 8.5 Members were updated about the engineering employers' initiative.
- 8.6 An extra £4.4 million had been secured for Suffolk through ESF funding from Go-East.
- 8.7 Members noted the Directors reports and commented that the summary of the Annual Plan was very useful.
- 8.8 The Chairman made a presentation to David Thornton, who was retiring from the County Council, acknowledging the close working relationship that had developed between Suffolk LSC and the local authority, and David's particular contribution to the development of 14-19 education in Suffolk.

(Dave Müller left the meeting)

Item 9. Local Area Agreements (LAA)

- 9.1 Kay went through the background to the local area agreements, highlighting the four priorities (blocks).
- 9.2 The LSC was due to be represented at LAA meetings by members of the Council. However, it was proposed that the Council Member be accompanied by a member of the executive until such time as the Member was happy to attend by themselves.
- 9.3 The following volunteered to be members of the block boards:
- Block 1 - Children and Young People – *Ashley Seaborne*
 - Block 2 – Safer, Stronger and Sustainable Communities – *tbc*
 - Block 3 – Healthier Communities and Older People – *Hamil Clarke*
 - Block 4 – Prosperity for all – *Anne Swietlik*

Action: Members asked that their responsibilities in reporting back to Council be clarified.

(Caroline Gumble and Patricia O'Brien left the meeting)

Item 10. Feedback from the Audit & Quality Committee

- 10.1 The Chairman updated Members about the proposed future of the Audit & Quality Committee, referring to the response received from Chris Banks, National Chairman, to the letter sent from the Chairman and Annette Whybrow, Chair of the local Audit & Quality Committee.

Action: It was agreed that the Chairman and Annette Whybrow would meet with SMT before the May Council meeting to discuss what reports could be referred to the Council instead of the sub committee.

10.2 Members discussed the possibility of extending the remit of the Audit & Quality Committee to include Capital. Members acknowledged that the work the committee had done on quality had been very useful and should continue.

Action: Members asked that an invitation be extended to Caroline Neville to attend the May meeting to discuss the responsibilities of the Council in the new structure.

10.3 The draft minutes of the last Audit & Quality Committee were noted.

(Madeleine Vigar left the meeting)

Item 11. Performance report

11.1 Kay referred to the report, highlighting the 'breakdown by sector subject area'. This illustrated that over time more provision needed to be seen in engineering and construction.

Action: Members were invited to e-mail any questions on the report to Kay Philips.

Item 12. Finance report

12.1 Next year's budgets had not yet been received. Members' attention was drawn to the LIF commitments for over £10k.

Item 13. Date of next meeting

13.1 The next meeting was clarified as being on Tuesday 16 May (not 28 May as listed on the agenda). The extended meeting would take place at Suffolk College from 2 pm, finishing with dinner in the college restaurant.

Meeting chair	Tony Preston
Minute taker	Jane Cattermole
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