

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 14 March 2006
Subject Council Meeting Ref: 02/06
Location Canius House
Time 18:00
LSC office London South
Publication intent Public

Present Council Members:
Richard Carter (Chair), Caroline Allen (Vice Chair), Jay Mercer, Roger Mills, John Ball, Lola Barrett, Dame Lorna Boreland-Kelly, Kevin Finnigan, Rita Bailey, Peter Wylie, Julita Pearson
Observer: Malcolm Brabon

LSC staff David Hughes, Vic Grimes, Mary Francis, Simon Churchill, Chris Dixon, Yvonne Akinmodun

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Liam McIlvenny, Robert Dilley, Prof David Miles, Mark Lunn, Linda Taylor, Chris Nicol

Item 1. **Welcome and introductions** - Chair welcomed Council, Observers, David Hughes (Regional Director), Officers and guests to the meeting and gave apologies for those unable to attend. The Chair also introduced and welcomed Yvonne Akinmodun to the meeting and explained that she was attending the meeting as part of an LSC initiative to increase the black and minority ethnic women represented on boards.

1.1 Minutes of the previous Council meeting – apart from two minor changes the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

1.2 There were no matters arising.

1.3 **Action points:**

Chair reported that Simon Churchill would give an update on Items 52 & 53 in his report and that Mary Francis had now completed action point 63.

Items 57 & 58. Roger Mills thanked Vic Grimes for including a target area for students excluded from formal education in the Local Annual Plan.

1.4 **Declaration of Interest:**

Peter Wylie expressed a non-pecuniary interest on agenda item 12 – John Ruskin Franchise Proposal.

Item 2. Audit Committee

The Chair explained that agenda item 3 would be brought forward as Roger Mills had to leave early to attend another meeting.

- 2.1 Roger Mills reported that the Audit Committee met on 7 February 2006. The Statement of Internal Control draft report was agreed and has since been signed off by Jay Mercer.
- 2.2 The Regional Audit Committee – Terms of Reference paper was tabled and a discussion took place.
- 2.3 It was established that the local Audit Committee would meet once more before the Regional Audit Committee is formed and that a member from London South would be nominated to attend the Regional Audit Committee meetings. Roger Mills explained that due to work commitments and travelling difficulties to Central London he would not expect to be able to represent London South on the Regional Audit Committee. Chair suggested that volunteers or nominations be made for representation at the next Audit Committee meeting scheduled for 18 April 2006.
- 2.4 **Action:** Roger Mills invited nominations to represent Council on the Regional Audit Committee in advance of the local Audit Committee meeting on 18 April 2006. A recommendation on membership will be put to the next Council meeting in May.
- 2.5 The Chair said how he appreciated all the good work Roger Mills has done for the London South Audit Committee to date. The Chair posed the question as to whether a local Audit/Scrutiny Committee would continue to be required at London South.
- 2.6 **Action:** This matter to be discussed at the next Audit Committee meeting and Roger Mills to prepare a paper on the need for a local Audit/Scrutiny committee for presentation to the Council meeting in May.

Item 3. Management Accounts

- 3.1 Simon Churchill gave an overview of the Period 9 Management Accounts and stated that the position was positive due to the return of a proportion of the administration budget. Simon Churchill reported an under spend on the Training Budget this year. This was due to the impact of Theme 7 activities, for example the Corporate Development Day scheduled was cancelled. All individual training applications had been examined carefully and each one approved as appropriate.

Item 4. Skills Alliance

- 4.1 John Ball reported that the Skills Alliance group had not met since the last Council meeting. A number of workshops and a positive survey have been organised and other activities are developing. The key task is to embed locally and to show commitment to all parties involved.

- 4.2 The next meeting of the Skills Alliance group is on 27 March 2006 at which the evaluation survey will be presented.

Item 5. Equality and Diversity Task Group

- 5.1 Caroline Allen reported that the meeting had now been rescheduled to 10 May 2006.

Item 6. IAG Strategy Board

- 6.1 Richard Carter reported that the IAG Strategy Board had met recently and that the minutes of the meeting are in the pack. He drew attention to Item 9 in the minutes and said that time would be taken at the next meeting to work through the occasional paper.

Item 7. FE Forum

- 7.1 Richard Carter reported that the Forum had met and the minutes of the meeting were in the pack. He expressed his disappointment at the number of persons in attendance at the meeting; however there was much positive feedback and collaboration from those who did attend. The meeting agenda was restricted to a maximum of 4 items to give more opportunity for discussion between the chairs of college governors and LSC representatives.

Item 8. David Hughes – Regional Director

- 8.1 David Hughes, the Regional Director for London introduced himself. He congratulated Caroline Allen on agreeing to chair the advisory group on Learners with Learning Difficulties and / or Disabilities. He hoped to meet with Caroline soon and to move forward quickly on this area.
- 8.2 David Hughes talked about the current issues surrounding the consultation exercise carried out by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Meetings had occurred and measures put in place to inform the Mayor and members of the Greater London Assembly as to what functions the LSC performs. There is a perceived lack of awareness and the profile of the LSC needs to be enhanced. Mark Haysom and David Hughes met with Ken Livingstone recently and had a positive discussion around the consultation on the Mayors powers for London.
- 8.3 In terms of Theme 7, a fundamental reorganisation of the LSC is currently underway. Selections and assessment are in progress and an announcement will be made by the end of March of senior appointments to the Regional Team. David Hughes said he was very impressed with how staff are keeping focussed on the business during a time of considerable change. He believes that the eventual structure and team will be fit for purpose. The Council were reassured that the new structure will ensure that local Councils

continue to play a very important role in strategic decision making and operational delivery.

8.4 Members of the Council expressed concern about the future of local councils and other sub-regional organisations that contribute to the LSC's priorities such as the South London Learning Partnership. David Hughes anticipated that the responsibilities of local council would not alter in the foreseeable future, however the audit committee is an obvious change. So far as sub-regional groups and partners are concerned, if these organisations could demonstrate very clearly how their work contributed to the local annual plan, then there should be scope for the LSC to continue supporting them.

8.5 A wide ranging discussion followed. Council members raised a number of points relating to the LSC's targets, programme funding issues, reducing bureaucracy, the role of the LSC in delivering Local Area Agreements and the management of the Agenda for Change Theme 7 process. On the latter point, David Hughes confirmed that arrangements were in place to assist individuals through the change process including a training and development programme aimed at supporting line managers and their staff through the application, assessment and interview process. He emphasised that the change was not driven by cutting costs but in making the organisation fit for purpose so that it can help transform the learning and skills sector. Overall he thought the Theme 7 programme was progressing well and to planned timescales.

8.6 Action: Vic Grimes to present a progress report at the next Council meeting on how Local Area Agreements are being implemented in LSC London South.

8.7 The Chair thanked David Hughes for his contribution to the meeting and for responding to the many questions from Council members. David Hughes left the meeting at this point.

Item 9. Executive Director's Report

9.1 Jay Mercer presented his report and received questions.

9.2 Following a question on capital projects Jay Mercer reported that there is to be a National Capital Committee meeting in April at which Regional Capital Strategies will be considered alongside future funding implications.

9.3 Dame Lorna declared a personal interest as a parent of a student at Merton College.

9.4 Council asked for more information on the Train to Gain scheme and requested a full presentation to be made at the next meeting of the Council.

9.5 **Action:** Mary Francis to prepare a paper/ presentation for Council in May 2006

- 9.6 Council sought clarification on whether Train to Gain would attract additional funding that providers could access.
- 9.7 **Action:** Mary Francis to investigate the funding arrangements and then report her findings to Council.
- 9.8 Lola Barrett stated how pleased she was with the content of the Tutor Empathy training that had been organised.

Items for decision or endorsement

Item 10. 16-19 Competitions: Local Statement of Need

- 10.1 Chris Dixon gave an overview of the process for 16-19 Competitions. Based on LSC London South's assessment of the demand for quality and choice of existing and planned post-16 provision. His view was that substantial new provision is required in the three boroughs of Richmond, Merton and Croydon.
- 10.2 Following publication of the outcomes of their post-16 reviews, the LSC proposed to consider inviting proposals for new provision in Merton and Croydon in 2007-2008.
- 10.3 Given the significant population growth in the borough of Richmond, combined with the limited choice in provision, the LSC wishes to receive proposals for new provision in the borough of Richmond in 2006-2007.
- 10.4 Jay Mercer confirmed that the LSC's London Management Group had been informed of London's South's intention run a competition in Richmond and were supportive.
- 10.5 The Council endorsed the recommendation in respect of Richmond and agreed that the decision to run competitions in Merton and Croydon should be kept under review.

Item 11. Annual Plan

- 11.1 Council received a 2nd draft of the Annual Plan and made a number of amendments. No comments received from local authorities. Regional Directors had signed off regional plans. The plans are due to be published 31/05/06. There are no major changes just rewording and a reordering of priorities.
- 11.2 Roger Mills asked for a change in the wording under Key Priority 1, to reflect the need to work with partners to address the issue of those young people who are excluded from school or those at risk of exclusion.
- 11.3 Caroline Allen asked that some minor changes be made to the formatting of the Annual Plan as it was hard to differentiate between text that related to London Region and London South. For the benefit of Council only, sections of the Plan relating to South London would be emboldened.
- 11.4 The Chair thanked Chris Dixon, Peter Butcher and members of the Planning and Performance team for their good work on producing the Annual Plan. The Chair hoped that there would be more opportunity for Council to

contribute to the production of the Regional and Local Plan during next year's planning cycle.

11.5 **Action:** Council endorsed the Local Plan subject to a minor amendment to the wording under Priority 1.

11.6 **Action:** Vic Grimes to amend wording in Plan and to produce a version of the Plan that clearly identifies South London's priorities.

Item 12. John Ruskin Franchise Proposal

12.1 A paper providing information on the proposed franchise arrangements between John Ruskin College and two Croydon schools (Selsdon High School and Shirley High School) to expand choice and improve progression through the use of marginal capacity was brought to council for endorsement. Council stated that they thought it was a sensible proposal. Council endorsed the proposal.

Items for Information

Item 13. London Learning & Skills Plan

13.1 A draft London Learning and Skills Plan was circulated for information. It has received much positive feedback about the strategic priorities for London. The final plan is due to be published at the end of March 2006.

Item 14. Provider Annual Review

14.1 Mary Francis explained that Annual Provider Reviews are taking place and this year a new approach is being used. Internal panels spent a whole day focussing on individual providers considering their performance and future plans within a borough context. Caroline Allen mentioned that London South is the only region that included specialist colleges in their reviews which is encouraging.

14.2 The council supported the use of this process in transition to the new structure and within the new borough teams.

Item 15. Quality Improvement Plan Update 2005/06

15.1 Mary Francis stated that with the implementation of the quality improvement plan in London South she was pleased to report that our providers have significantly improved the quality of their learning and skills provision. There are no providers who are "less than satisfactory". Mary Francis stated that this was an excellent outcome and would not have happened without the work of a dedicated Quality Team.

15.2 The Chair thanked Mary and everyone involved with the on-going drive to improve the quality of the learning and skills provision across the sub-region.

Item 16. Public Consultation – 11-18 Academies in Merton

16.1 Mary Francis informed Council of proposals to develop two 11-18 academies in Merton. She explained that LSC London South had responded to a public consultation run by the Local Authority confirming that we consider the size of the sixth forms to be inappropriate and that stronger collaborative arrangements need to be put in place. Council members noted the LSC's response and asked to be kept informed of future developments.

Item 17. A.O.B.

17.1 John Ball brought to the Council's attention a piece of work that Kevin Finnigan had carried out in relation to the Union Learning Centre at the Bus Garage. The Council voiced their appreciation of this project and asked that Kevin circulate the information booklet to Council members.

17.2 **Action:** Kevin Finnigan to circulate his booklet.

17.3 Lola Barrett said that she had heard a rumour that the LSC is about to take on responsibility for the delivery of training provision currently managed by Jobcentre Plus. Jay Mercer said he was aware that there had been discussions between Government Ministers about this but that that there was an issue about the transfer of budgets between departments.

17.4 The Chair was asked whether Council should consider running a Council development day. The Chair stated that given the ODPM consultation and Theme 7 developments, he did not think it would be sensible to arrange a Council development day at this moment in time.

17.5 Vic Grimes gave an update on the Bromley College Capita Bid. He explained that Phase 1 was well underway and nearing completion and needed Council to approve the proposal for Phase 2. Due to timing issues, Council agreed to delegate decision making authority to the Chair and Executive Director. However, there was an opportunity for the Audit Committee to consider the application at their meeting in April. In addition, all Council members will be invited to review the Capital submission and comment, prior to the Chair and ED making any decision.

17.6 **Action:** Vic Grimes to prepare Capital paper for Chair and ED and circulate to Council for comment. Audit Committee to consider the capital application at their meeting in April.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday 9th May 2006

Publication no.

Meeting chair

Richard Carter

Minute taker

Sue Tickner

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