

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 7 April 2006
Subject Local Council
Location Blue and Yellow
Time 09:00
LSC office London Central
Publication intent Internal

Present Yvonne Thompson, Chair (ASAP Communications)
David Congalton (Emprise Services plc)
Cllr Keith Cunningham (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea)
Keith Faulkner (Working Links)
Peter Ibbetson (NatWest, retired)
Maxine Jones (London Development Agency)
Roy Lockett (BECTU, retired)
Jill Lowery (LSC London Central)
Angela McConville (Vital Regeneration)
Raymond Madden (Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales)
Janet Morrison (North Westminster Community School)
Su Thomas (PACE)

In attendance Marie Devall (Government Office for London)
Rob Grover (Business Link for London)
Chris Heaume (Central London Connexions)
Sue Rimmer (South Thames College)

LSC staff Steve Crow (Director of Development)
Saskia Gretton (Clerk to the Council)
Tony Nelson (Director of Skills and Workforce Development)
Chris Wright (Acting Director of Operations)

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Geoffrey Copland (University of Westminster)
Satnam Gill (Working Mens College)
Michael Hickey (Jobcentre Plus)
Amanda Howells (Youth Crime Consultant)

Item 1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 Yvonne Thompson welcomed the Regional Director David Hughes. Due to time constraints David gave his update and took questions from the local Council before the formal opening of the meeting.
- 1.2 Following this discussion, Yvonne Thompson welcomed Marie Devall from Government Office for London, who replaces Richard Wragg as the GoL observer, and the Council introduced themselves.

Item 2. Regional Director's update

- 2.1 David Hughes gave a brief introduction, outlining the current position with Theme 7, and current developments including the FE White Paper and the Consultation on the Mayors Powers. This was followed by discussion with the Council on issues raised.
- 2.2 **Theme 7:** A number of appointments have been made but there are still a number of vacancies, including the Regional Finance and Resources Director. The Band 4 selection process is still underway. The number of posts across the region is rising from 17 to 43. It is possible that there will be 25 vacancies at this level.
- 2.3 The new structure will result in a strong regional focus on skills, finance and quality. With a local borough focus on 14-19, managed through small borough teams lead by senior people. Each borough will be different. Where boroughs are doing well, we will take a light touch, focusing resources where they are needed. The new structure will also strengthen communication between the strategic level and implementation on issues such as Skills.
- 2.4 **The FE White paper** builds on Foster and Agenda for Change, its emphasis is on partnership and competition, but it also provides the LSC with lots of opportunity to set its own agenda, as much of the detail is yet to be worked out.
- 2.5 In addition, the FE White paper presents an opportunity to address the nature of council membership and the engagement of members. There will be opportunities for council members to feed into the consultation, and Council members should be active in engaging with this reform.
- 2.6 **Consultation on the Mayors Powers:** The results of this are embargoed until after the local elections. David Hughes is working closely with the Mayor's Office on the structure. The new relationship with the Mayor will not have an immediate impact on the staff in London LSCs, but it is impossible to predict the next 3 years.
- 2.7 Both of these developments will have implications for local councils. As a result of these changes, and Agenda for Change, London will look quite

different from the other areas, but it is the only region that is a city and the only city with an elected mayor and assembly.

- 2.8 **Risk:** The most significant risk associated with Theme 7 is that only half the necessary staff at Bands 4 and 5 will be appointed by June 1st. However, the LSC expect all the teams to be in place by October, and we will be asking partners for secondments to cover key vacancies during the transition.
- 2.9 The LSC London Region has a Risk Strategy and all local offices are drawing up transition plans and maintain a register of high level risks. The London Central Audit Committee met on the 6th of April and considered a report on high level risks. Jill reported that an initial transition plan had been produced, but that it needed further work, which is in hand.
- 2.10 Despite the risk of key staff leaving, morale is still relatively high and staff are doing a good job of ensuring that business continues as normal.

Action: Saskia to circulate paper on High Level Risks, and Transition Plan when available, to the Council

Item 3. Declarations of Interest and Minutes of the last meeting

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest and the minutes were approved without amendments or corrections. All the action points were acted upon.

3.3 Steve Crow gave an update on Building Schools for the Future. There have not been many developments since the last meeting. However, he could give updates on the two boroughs that currently have plans.

- **Westminster:** These plans have been changed as a result of the LSC's comments, and we are now happy with them.
- **Lambeth:** We are still in discussions with the borough about this plan.

The Council discussed the challenges faced local authorities when planning capital investment given the lack of clarity on when Building Schools for the future funding will be available to lower priority areas. The LSC's regional Capital Strategy will go some way to addressing this problem as it will incorporate knowledge about developments such as Academies and BS4F.

Action: Steve Crow to give a presentation on BS4F, and other 14-19 Developments such as Academies at a future meeting

Action: Regional Capital Strategy to be brought to a future meeting for discussion

Item 4. Employer Engagement and Train to Gain

- 4.1 Tony Nelson gave a presentation outlining the ways in which he has strengthened Workforce Development in London Central. Slides of the

presentation are attached. The council discussed issues covered during the presentation.

4.2 The main areas covered by the presentation were:

- The work that was undertaken to develop a strategic approach to WfD.
- The move away from an over dependence on Investors in People. The shift from a product focused approach to a needs based approach.
- The work that has been done with Colleges to improve their responsiveness (ahead of Train to Gain) to employers.

Due to time constraints, Council members were asked to email any additional questions directly to Tony Nelson.

Action: Council members to email any additional questions to Tony Nelson

Item 5. Overview of Regional and Local Budgets

5.1 Jill Lowery presented this paper, before starting, she drew attention to an error – the figure for 2006/07 School Sixth form Funding is £47.8 million

5.2 The LSC is moving to a regional framework for funding. This will lead to more consistency, with local budgets being an aggregation of provider allocations.

5.3 Funding for 2006-07 is tight. Funding has gone up, but demands on this funding have gone up as well. The area where this will have greatest impact is Adult Learning.

5.4 In addition, there has been a 10% reduction in LIDF funding. The local and regional split of the remaining funding is yet to be agreed, but it is likely that local offices will only get a 3rd of previous budgets. This will mean that the majority of the local budget will be taken up by current commitments

Action: Details of the LIDF budget will be brought to the next meeting

Item 6. Regional Audit Committee

6.1 Jill Lowery introduced this item, which was discussed in detail at the Audit Committee on the 6th of April.

6.2 Keith Faulkner has been nominated to the Regional Committee.

6.3 The Local Audit Committee's recommendation is to wind up the Local Audit Committee once the Regional one is established. In addition, they recognise that it will be necessary to strengthen the relationship between the Regional Audit Committee and the Local Council.

6.4 The local Audit Committee will meet at least once more in June.

Decision: The Local Council agreed to wind up the Local Audit Committee once the Regional Audit Committee is established.

Item 7. Management Report

7.1 The Council noted this report.

Item 8. AoB and date of next meeting

8.1 The next meeting is the 26th of May

8.2 Council Congratulated Jill Lowery on her appointment as Director of London Central LSC.

8.3 Council members also discussed the Information Item on Education Maintenance Allowances. Specifically, a question was raised about the benefit for young people who did not have high levels of academic ability. The Council members who work with young people shared their experiences of the impact of the EMA. It is a valuable way of increasing opportunities to engage with young people, and part of the Treasury's income strategy for young people.

Meeting chair	Yvonne Thompson
Minute taker	Saskia Gretton
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