

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date	20 December 2005
Subject	London East Council
Location	Boardroom
Time	09:00
LSC office	London East
Publication intent	Internal

Present	Vivien Cutler Ken Coello Mark Elliott Sandra Moore
In attendance	Jonathan Fairclough
LSC staff	Nicole Francis Duncan Kent Jim Lewis Tony Oliva
Apologies	Apologies have been received from: Nick Wright Jan Tallis Roger Tucker Jennifer Izekor Geoff Pine Mick Connoly Kenny Fredrick Mohamed Omer Sharon Collins Carolyn Simpson

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Ken Coello welcomed members to the meeting and informed them that the appointments of Kenny Frederick, Sandra Moore and Mark Elliott to the Council had been confirmed by the Appointments Committee.

Item 2. Minutes of the last meeting

2.1 The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record.

Item 3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Jim Lewis and Ken Coello would be meeting in the near future re Olympics.
- 3.2 Final clarity on procurement processes was awaited in relation to Work Based Learning partnerships. Care might be needed not to overburden employers in the various work-based learning initiatives.
- 3.3 Ken Coello would write to Elizabeth Balgobin and Jan Tallis with thanks for their work. Jennifer Izekor and Lyn Connelly would also be written to and JobCentre plus asked to confirm their nomination for a replacement.

Item 4. Executive Director's report

- 4.1 Vivien Cutler spoke to her report, updating Council on progress with the Theme 7 reorganisation. Meetings had been held internally to keep staff informed of the process as much as possible. The selection process was not likely to start until February, beginning with the most senior bands. Nicole Francis was a member of the London regional working group. Ken Coello commented that the proposed regional structure was slightly more expensive than at present. How the reorganisation would impact on the distribution of BME staff within the LSC was discussed; an impact assessment of the proposals was being carried out. Business processes were being examined to ensure the proposed structure would be able to deliver business objectives. The position ESF staff, who were funded separately from the LSC administration budget, was explained.
- 4.2 A letter had been received from Andrew Adonis in response to the Tower Hamlets PIAP questioning why there was no proposal for an Academy; notwithstanding, the PIAP was approved without reservation. A response had been sent to the DfES. For the present time there would be no additional work to that included in the plan but the proposal for an Academy was likely to remain in discussion.
- 4.3 A new substantive chair had been appointed to the board of Bexley College, which should provide some greater assurance to the inspectorate re leadership and management. The challenges in working with the College to improve standards were explained. The LSC had a limited range of tools with which to influence the management of the College. The principal issues with the College had been poor leadership and management characterised by a failure to acknowledge and respond to the issues raised in the inspection report compounded by poor quality data and data collection systems. Additional management support was now in place and consultants appointed to assist in providing accurate data and improve systems. A strategic option review would be carried out in the new year to examine the options for meeting the demand for provision in Bexley and the area south of the river generally.

Item 5. Annual Plan 2006/07 – report

- 5.1 Nicole Francis explained that a draft of the plan was not available at this stage as a number of factors remained to be clarified. The February meeting of Council would need to agree the plan when published. The plan would

include a greater regional element than had previously been the case. An overarching London regional plan would also be produced. Key issues for young people were: increasing provision to meet growth in the 16-18 cohort notwithstanding the cohort population was predicted to decline post 2008; reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET); increasing the numbers achieving a Level 2 qualification at 19 (Level 2@19); raising completion rates; developing new provision in priority industry sectors; and focusing on learners with disabilities and the needs of ethnic minorities. It was explained that Level 2@19 learners had to be studying for a first Level 2 qualification to count toward the target. Completion rates in apprenticeships and Skills for Life provision was a priority as was raising the level of adult skills generally. Economically inactive adults were also a key group to address. Future skills requirements were predicted to be higher than the current level of adult skills, which issue was likely to be compounded by the Thames Gateway development. Funding needed to be related to economic development priorities.

- 5.2 It was explained there were variations in the numbers of NEET young people across boroughs, with a diverse range of factors involved. There was concern at the drop out rate at 19. The Government Office for London (GOL) was undertaking work to look at economically inactive adults and how best to address the problem. LB Tower Hamlets had expressed concern that this group were not achieving employment once they had received skills training; there were deeper issues of habituation to unemployment and changing behaviours. The LSC had a limited range of levers to address the problem and needed to work with partners. The Misc. 26 Cabinet Committee was also examining the issue.
- 5.3 There would be a stronger link between provider annual plans and LSC plans. Meetings had been held with providers. Following agreement by Council the plans would be presented to the Regional Director, with final sign-off in March.

Item 6. Allocations Strategy

- 6.1 Indicative allocations would be available in January, but firm details were not available yet about local budgets. The Regional total allocation had been communicated. It was planned to communicate indicative figures at the end of January with firm allocations indicated at the end of February. There was concern amongst providers that this was late notice should they need to make significant changes to their organisations.
- 6.2 It was explained there would be a reduction in adult learning funding. Briefings had been given to providers. The allocations process included regular discussion with the Association of Colleges (AoC). Specialist institutions would have a degree of protection but for other adult providers a common approach would be taken in assessing any reduction in funding. The issues in increasing the level of fee contribution were discussed.

Item 7. Financial Update

- 7.1 The required savings in the budget were explained. As staff left and were not replaced for the time being additional savings would be made. It was expected to carry over £2.2m into next year to fund trainees in existing ETP programmes. Possible changes to the mix of provision between colleges and sixth forms at 16-18 were highlighted.
- 7.2 Expected capital projects were outlined. Ken Coello would ask Kenny Frederick to become a member of the Urgent Approvals Committee. It was explained that after costs the proceeds of the sale of estate by Bexley College would be ring-fenced for capital expenditure.

Item 8. Redbridge College Ilford Town Centre capital application: report from Urgent Approvals Committee

- 8.1 Council noted the report and approval by the Urgent Approvals Committee. The context of the College and development was explained.

Item 9. Audit Committee minutes 18 October 2005

- 9.1 Council noted the minutes. The various roles of the committee were explained and the different LSC staff who attended to give support to these. The main current issues were mentioned. It was reported that WEA had passed its re-inspection.

Item 10. Membership of the Audit Committee

- 10.1 Mark Elliot and Sandra Moore were appointed to the Committee. A introduction to the work of the Audit Committee would be included in the new member induction process.

Item 11. Appointment of a member of Council to the board of BE (to replace Elizabeth Balgobin)

- 11.1 Further consideration would be given before an appointment was made.

Item 12. ESF Programme 02-04 evaluation report

- 12.1 Tony Oliva introduced the report in the absence of Jason Fletcher who was on sick leave. Ecotec had been commissioned to review performance over the period 2002-04. The report highlighted good success rates and good management. A number of issues had been highlighted for further improvement in the future. The expertise of the LSC ESF staff was highlighted and concern expressed that the good management and service provided should not be lost in any reorganisation. The degree of engagement of London East ESF programmes with BME communities was highlighted. Concern was expressed at the way other parts of the ESF programme in the London Region were managed.

Item 13. Community Champions report

- 13.1 Nicole Francis reminded members that the programme had now come to an end and the report provided a final summary of its work. The programme had been very successful in reaching learners and had large benefits that

justified the resource commitment. It would be sought to keep the Community Champions engaged with the LSC through other programmes. The programme was highlighted as a good example of the LSC's work that could usefully be given wider advertisement. The report would be passed to the Regional Director, David Hughes.

Item 14. Any other business

14.1 An induction programme for new members would be held. New members were invited to highlight any specific areas they would like covered.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7 February 2006, 9:00 a.m. Boardman House

Meeting chair	Ken Coello
Minute taker	Duncan Kent
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