

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Minutes of meeting

Date	22 March 2005
Subject	Council Meeting
Location	Boardroom
Time	09:00
LSC office	London East
Publication intent	Internal

Present

Ken Coello (Chair)
Vivien Cutler (Executive Director)
Nick Wright
Sharon Collins
Roger Tucker
Mohamed Omer
Cllr Graham Lane
Elizabeth Balgobin
Mick Connolly
Geoff Pine
Heidi Watson

In attendance

Jonathan Fairclough (GOL)
Sharon Dodd (Connexions)

LSC staff

Tony Oliva (Director of Finance and Internal Services)
Nicole Francis (Director of Strategic Development and Quality)
Laura Gander-Howe (Interim Director of Lifelong Learning and Skills)
Jim Lewis (Skills Director, Thames Gateway)

Apologies

Apologies have been received from:

Jan Tallis
Cllr Gavin Moore
Dan Moynihan
Heidi Watson
Lynn Conolly

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Ken Coello welcomed members to the meeting.

Item 2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 Roger Tucker to be added to the list of apologies
2.2 The minutes were agreed as accurate.

Item 3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Item 6.7. The Annual Plan is covered later in the agenda.
- 3.2 Item 8.3. Tony Oliva has asked Newham College to look at the issue of high professional fees and the procurement of advisors. The LSC will not pay fees at that level again.
- 3.3 Item 8.4. The Newham Building Schools for the Future proposal was sent to members who had left the meeting early and was approved.

Item 4. Executive Director's Report

- 4.1 LSCLE has still not received its final budget allocation. The process was delayed slightly while London was making a case for additional funding which has been successful. The further delay has largely related to the need to allocate budgets equably across the region.
- 4.2 The issue of 16-18 growth may be recognised and LSCLE may receive some more money to accommodate this.
- 4.3 There is an indication that allocations will be agreed by the end of May.
- 4.4 A few changes were made to the Annual Plan following the last meeting; Council members were thanked for their contributions. The plan was well received by National Office.
- 4.5 The Director of Employer Engagement and Skills has been appointed and will start on 31st May. The structure of the new Directorate is being finalised. Council requested that the new Director be invited to the next Council meeting.

Action: VC

- 4.6 £65 million has been allocated nationally for ETP and its transition to the national rollout.
- 4.7 The Area Wide Inspection of Tower Hamlets went very well. There was some criticism of the lack of Work Based Learning in the Borough, which was not unexpected. The Inspectors recognised the improving relationship between the LSC and the LEA. A Post Inspection Action Plan is being drafted.
- 4.8 The second monitoring visit of Bexley College took place this month, 11 months after the original inspection. Overall the college has made 'limited progress'. Some areas of learning have improved whilst one was judged to have made 'no discernable progress'.
- 4.9 The LSC is seeking an emergency meeting with the Governors of the college before the June monitoring visit to discuss future support to the college.

Action: KC to write to the Clerk of the Corporation

- 4.10 VC has spoken to the Centre of Excellence and Leadership (CEL) and Roger Marriott at National Office to discuss what improvements might be expected at this stage in the cycle.
- 4.11 LSCLE has been unable to identify additional governors despite contacting the Local Authority, Politicians, London First and the Chamber of Commerce. Members were urged to suggest governors. Any suggestions to be sent to Katherine Lee.

Action: Council members

Members requested a list of the current governors be sent to them before the next meeting.

Action: KL

- 4.12 Geoff Pine noted that part of the leadership and management grade is dependent upon success rates and achievement. The most recent results are not yet available and it is unlikely that an institution of that size will be able to turn things round quickly, however, he hoped that this year's results would show improvements.
- 4.13 Vivien Cutler explained that LSCLE does not wish to be negative but feels that the pace of change is not fast enough. The college must accept the messages from the first inspection, develop a sense of urgency and encourage higher expectations. The LSC will keep challenging the college whilst offering support.
- 4.14 A question was raised regarding LSC liability and the ability to influence. LSCLE is considering asking the Governors to allow CEL to undertake a second review of the college, a year after their initial review. Discussions have already taken place with the Principal regarding putting some additional management support in place. Additional governors would also allow the LSC to influence. LSCLE does have a liability in terms of funding quality provision for learners and in as much as it would not wish to be found wanting in the support offered to the college.

Item 5. Finance Report

- 5.1 Tony Oliva spoke to his report.
- 5.2 Budgets have not yet been confirmed. LSCLE has identified the savings required by National Office.
- 5.3 There are some issues for concern:
- The admin budget has been cut next year and inflation will have to be absorbed in the reduced figure. Over the next two or three years admin budgets will be reduced even further and this will have to be addressed.
 - Extra headings have been added to the Local Intervention Development Fund (LID) budget thereby decreasing the flexibility of the budget.
- 5.4 Members were concerned that the flexibility of the LID budget is being reduced again and suggested that it is now a misnomer to call the budget local.

Item 6. Autumn Review of Provider Information

- 6.1 Laura Gander-Howe spoke to her paper.
- 6.2 The Autumn Reviews were undertaken in order to gain a more consistent over-view and understanding of our providers. The Reviews are part of the new way of working for Borough teams and to ensure that they are better informed. The information will be shared with the Borough 14-19 groups and the NEET strategy groups to inform strategies and action plans. It will also be shared with the Connexions operational groups.
- 6.3 Members asked whether they could see breakdowns by provider for 16-18 year olds.

Action: LGH

- 6.4 Council thanked LGH for the information, which they found useful. They asked for an update on the sign-off of three-year development plans at the July meeting.

Action: LGH

- 6.5 Pre level 3 ESOL provision will be funded and entry-level provision will be protected, 'other' provision that leads to qualifications in ESOL will be supported. LSCLE is working to balance demands within the budget restrictions.

Action: LGH to report back to Council

- 6.6 Council also requested information on what type of provision falls within each category of 'other' provision.

Action: LGH

Item 7. Annual Plan

- 7.1 Nicole Francis spoke to her report.
- 7.2 There have been a number of changes to the structure and content of the plan since Council last saw it; Regional and National Office have dictated these.
- 7.3 Once budgets have been confirmed the plan will be brought back to the Council for a more meaningful discussion.

Action: NF

Item 8. Community Champions

- 8.1 Nicole Francis spoke to the report, which was for the Council's information.
- 8.2 Mohamed Omer asked whether this project would be extended to other boroughs. A full evaluation of the project is planned. Should good practice be evident, then a rollout to other boroughs will be considered.
- 8.3 Members suggested that many of the ESF projects include the use of community champions; this is quite an expensive way to capacity build individuals.
- 8.4 The full evaluation report will be brought to Council in the next six months.

Action: NF

Item 9. Verbal report back from the Audit Committee

- 9.1 Heidi Watson was unable to attend the Council meeting but had sent a briefing for Tony Oliva to run through.
- 9.2 Jan Tallis has resigned from the Audit Committee so a replacement is needed.
- 9.3 The Audit Committee is concerned about the Business Link / Reed in Partnership contract. The contract has only recently been signed and is already behind schedule. The committee has written to the Regional Finance Director, Brian Godbold, and Verity Bullough, seeking assurance that the contract is properly monitored.
- 9.4 Staffing and retention of staff is still shown as red in the risk register. This is a London issue and LSCLE is working to address this.
- 9.5 Provider Financial Assurance (PFA) work is up to date.
- 9.6 The committee is concerned that contracts are not renewed with unsuccessful Work Based Learning providers.
- 9.7 Internal Audit are visiting LSCLE in April and will be concentrating on FE franchising and partnership working. The outcome of the visit will be shared with the Audit Committee.
- 9.8 Hackney Community College has financial problems and announced redundancies last Friday. Tony Oliva has met with the College's bankers. Vivien Cutler and Tony Oliva have also met the College Chair and Chair of the Finance Committee.
- Council asked what impact the redundancies would have on learners and provision. Hackney Community College is ensuring that all LSC contracts will be delivered.
- It is important that Hackney Community College should position itself strategically in the wider context of the borough. The College should work with Brooke House, the Learning Trust and other post-16 providers to capture key sectors.

Item 10. Any other business

10.1 A question was raised about the assessment of local LSC performance. The Performance Scorecard has been developed recently and once it has been bedded down it will be brought to Council as a standing item.

Action: VC to cover the scorecard in her report to Council

10.2 The LSC relationship with Academies has still not been clarified and the LSC is still waiting for definitive guidance. Council will be kept informed.

10.3 Suggestions for future agenda items:

- Skills for Communities plan – for the May meeting
- EDIMS and equality – for the July meeting
- Young People Green paper and Connexions – for the July meeting

10.4 Any suggestions for Bexley governors should be sent to Kat Lee a.s.a.p.

10.5 The September Council meeting may have to be rescheduled.

Item 11. Date of next meeting: 17th May

Publication no.

Meeting chair Ken Coello

Minute taker Katherine Le

Document ref. G:\Executive Unit\Council\Council\Meetings\meetings 2005\22nd March 2005\loe-councilmeeting-internalminutes-22mar2005-v0-1.doc

Version 0.1

Date of version 23 March 2005

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