

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Minutes of meeting

Date	8 February 2005
Subject	Council Meeting
Location	Boardroom
Time	09:00
LSC office	London East
Publication intent	Internal

Present	Ken Coello (Chair) Vivien Cutler (Executive Director) Sharon Collins Elizabeth Balgobin Geoff Pine Mick Connolly Cllr Graham Lane Jan Tallis
In attendance	Lynn Conolly (Jobcentre Plus) Sharon Dodd (Connexions) Jon Fairclough (GOL)
LSC staff	Tony Oliva (Director of Finance and Internal Services) Nicole Francis (Director of Strategic Development and Quality) Jim Lewis (Skills Director, Thames Gateway)
Apologies	Apologies have been received from: Cllr Gavin Moore Mohamed Omer Nick Wright Heidi Watson Dr Dan Moynihan Roger Tucker Laurie Hull (Business Link) Laura Gander-Howe

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Ken Coello introduced Jim Lewis, Skills Director, Thames Gateway.

Item 2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 The Minutes were agreed as accurate.

Item 3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Ken Coello is no longer the LSC Pan-London Chair.
- 3.2 Vivien Cutler has written to London first and the Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham Chamber of Commerce regarding the nomination of an additional two members for the Bexley College Governing Body.
- 3.3 Value added was raised at the Pan London meeting on 15th December. A series of working groups have been set up to look at the issue in London.

Action: VC to feed back the outcome of these discussions.

- 3.4 There have been some initial discussions around developing a sports academy in Stratford. Should this come to fruition the LSC should be involved in the planning from an early stage.

Item 4. Executive Director's Report

- 4.1 The case for increased funding for London has met with some success although the initial FE allocations for London East are not very promising. The allocations have not been finalised yet and further discussions are expected this week.
- 4.2 Cuts in college allocations may have serious implications and may result in staff losses.
- 4.3 Should funding increases be set at less than 5% and fail to take account of growth and capital projects this would represent a fall in real terms. Colleges that have under spent may be rebased.
- 4.4 Tower Hamlets College was recently inspected and has been given very good provisional results.
- 4.5 Vivien Cutler presented to HMI as part of the Tower Hamlets Area Wide Inspection. The Inspectors expressed concerns around the synergy of the LSC and Tower Hamlets strategies. This is largely due to the fact that the LSC looks at London East as a whole whereas Tower Hamlets is borough-focused. LSCLE has also provided the Inspectors with more data around construction provision in the London East area.
- 4.6 Jim Lewis will report to the Council on the Thames Gateway at a future meeting. Jim informed Council that he had attended the Sustainable Communities Summit in Manchester. The Summit was well attended by Cabinet members. There is an awareness that sustainable communities are not just about housing. The major speeches from the summit are available on the ODPM website.
- 4.7 A report on the Ford project will come to a future Council meeting. This project represents a considerable amount of work for LSCLE and additional resource has been requested from National Office.
- 4.8 Mick Connolly reiterated the importance of the project. Collaboration between the LSC, LDA and Ford had saved the Dagenham plant. The project illustrates how manufacturing is still important in the Thames Gateway.
- 4.9 Tower Hamlets LEA is now assessing whether there is a demographic need for an Academy. LSCLE is seeking clarification on governance and the LSC role in competitions from the Academies Unit.
- 4.10 The second monitoring visit at Bexley College is scheduled for early March. Council will be informed of progress made. Members were asked to suggest potential members for the Bexley College Governing Body.

Action: Members to contact VC with nominations.

- 4.11 Over 60 people have requested information on the new Director post. Interviews will take place in late February. Tony Oliva is working with the Workforce Development and Employer Training Pilot teams to set up a structure for the new Directorate.
- 4.12 Ken Coello reminded Council members to request a briefing from LSCLE if they are attending events in their capacity as Council members.
- 4.13 Council noted the paper.
- 4.14 Cllr Graham Lane and Mick Connolly left the meeting.

Item 5. Finance Report

- 5.1 Tony Oliva presented the report.
- 5.2 There were no major issues as of December 2004, under spends can be used to absorb overspends.
- 5.3 Area Wide Inspection money and Ethnic Minority Student Achievement Grants (EMSAG) have now been absorbed into the Local Initiative Development (LID) budget, effectively reducing the size of the discretionary budget.
- 5.4 Council were concerned that the current budget situation does not fit with the supposed move to demand led funding and expressed dismay that the discretionary budget has effectively been reduced again.
- 5.5 Jan Tallis has agreed to sit on the National Network Liaison Committee (Graham Lane is also a member). The Committee is seeking more feedback from local Council members and the LSC Chair Chris Banks attends the meetings.
- 5.6 Council noted the paper.

Item 6. Local Priorities and Draft Annual Plan 05/06

- 6.1 Nicole Francis presented the paper.
- 6.2 The LSC is no longer producing three-year plans but a three-year vision is included in the annual plan. The plan follows a National Office template, which prescribes sections and length. LSCLE is seeking Council's input on the three-year vision and whether the plan adequately reflects the London East area.
- 6.3 Vivien Cutler is meeting the Regional Director on 14th February to discuss the plan. London Region has to present the plans to Mark Haysom on 1st March. All plans must be signed off by the end of March.
- 6.4 The plan does not include budgets or targets; once these have been received the plan may be revised.
- 6.5 In discussion the following comments were made:
 - Page 3 "Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development," how will the LSC do this?
 - There is very little local context; it is not possible to write the same plans for 47 local offices.
 - Page 8. The use of the phrase "soft skills" is wrong, as it does not reflect the importance of these skills.
 - Page 10. Is this vibrant/commanding enough? Is there a clear role for the LSC?
 - The vibrancy of employer networks in London East should be captured in the plan.
 - Connexions is driving forward the Work Based Learning agenda for young people and has received £4.4 million ESF funding for this work.

- There are only a couple of paragraphs on Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD) and Equality and Diversity at the back of the plan. Information on targets and planned activities should be moved to the local priorities section.

Action: NF

- The Level 2 Entitlement could become a real issue in terms of resources and there is a tension with the need for Level 3 provision which is vital, especially in the Thames Gateway.
- The LSC should seek to avoid duplication of funding with the LDA, GOL and Jobcentre Plus. Alignment or pooling of funding would be desirable.
- The Business Link contract has not been signed yet. Until the contract has been signed this should not be included in the plan.

Action: NF to check when the contract will be signed.

6.6 Sharon Collins complimented Vivien and her team for their work on the annual planning process.

Decision: Council agreed to delegate authority to the Chair to sign off the plan.

6.7 The amended plan will be sent to Council once targets have been added.

Action: NF

Item 7. StAR Consultation

7.1 Nicole Francis presented the paper.

7.2 LSCLE received 90 responses across sectors and Boroughs, which was the highest level of response in London. There is a slight concern about the low response rate from schools.

7.3 The vast majority of responses supported the proposals. The only significant objections to all of the proposals came from the Diocese who made similar objections to the other London LSC proposals. Peter Pledger has arranged with the Diocese to discuss their objections.

7.4 The Report will be published on the LSC StAR website; comments on the proposals will not be attributable. Comments made through the consultation process will be fed back through the Pan London StAR group.

7.5 The next step is to produce a three-year plan to take a longer-term look at the area. The plan should be completed in April or May and will be brought to the Stakeholder Group and Council. The annual plan will pick up activity from StAR that can take place this year.

7.6 Sharon Collins gave a verbal update to Council on the progress of the Stakeholder Group and next steps.

7.7 The purpose of the Stakeholder Group was clearly defined but how to wind-up the group was not, for this reason the group decided to produce and monitor the three-year plan.

7.8 The group was the embodiment of collaboration and innovation in London East and has given a clear framework for decision-making. Clear messages from the group were:

- the importance of independent advice and guidance;
- the need for a stronger emphasis on supporting the NEET group;
- Higher Education should be included;
- Academies should be tackled;

- adults are often the most vulnerable and lowest qualified;
- do not ignore the needs of young offenders;
- concerns that adult learning is increasingly target driven;
- demand must come first.

7.9 Sharon Collins thanked her colleagues on the Stakeholder Group for their work.

7.10 Any comments should be sent to Nicole Francis by the end of the day.

7.11 Ken Coello and Vivien Cutler thanked Sharon Collins for her work on the Stakeholder Group.

Item 8. Newham College Building Schools for the Future Capital Application

8.1 Tony Oliva presented the report.

8.2 This project is being funded with Building Schools for the Future money rather than by the LSC. The project has been assessed by the LSC and meets the normal capital project requirements.

8.3 Council asked Tony Oliva to check why the professional fees figures (check with Tony; I thought they were even higher!)10%) are so high.

Action: TO

8.4 The members present endorsed the proposal. However, as the meeting was not quorate for this item it was agreed that the proposal would be sent to Nick Wright and Mick Connolly via email to seek their approval.

Action: KL

Item 9. Verbal Report from the Audit Committee

9.1 It was agreed to carry this item over to the next meeting as Heidi Watson, Chair of the Audit Committee had sent her apologies for the Council meeting.

Item 10. Any Other Business

10.1 Following the autumn stock take meetings LSCLE intends to present the data gathered around trends and success rates to the Council. This is likely to take up most of the next meeting.

10.2 Jim Lewis will present the Skills for Communities Plan at the following meeting.

10.3 The date of the next meeting is 22nd March.

Publication no.

Meeting chair Ken Coello

Minute taker Katherine Lee

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