

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 2 March 2007
Subject Sixty Ninth Council Meeting
Location LSC London North, Dumayne House
Time 08.30 - 10.30
LSC office London North
Publication intent Public

Present

Peter Lyne	Keith Weller
Surendra Deo	John McGill (items 1-3 only)
Alison Dickens	Yolande Burgess
Nick Drane	Colin Madden
Janette Faherty	Sarah Carrick
David Plank	Hazel Sheridan (note-taker)
Mary Vine-Morris	

Apologies Apologies have been received from:

Afzal Akram	Carol Gibson
Paul Butler	Lenny Kinnear
Ian Ferguson	Ian Turner

Item 1. Welcome and minutes of last meeting

- 1.1 DP requested that in item 5.2 the following words be added:
percentage – between disproportionate and number
underachievers – between NEET and are.

Action: HS to amend minutes accordingly

- 1.2 The minutes were otherwise agreed as accurate.

Item 2. Matters arising

- 2.1 Item 2.1 –Sean McMahon (London 14-19 Director) has informed MVM that the LSC London Region hopes to hold a regional NEET conference before the summer.
- 2.2 Item 3.7 – Council response to Leitch and demand-led funding consultation.

Action: MVM to send response from Council to consultation document by deadline.

Chair summarised the Council's response to the Leitch report, saying that it contains no ambition which we would not wish to pursue, however the cost is

significant and funding means unclear. The aspirations are good but there are serious flaws in how they can be implemented. Council will discuss this further at a later date.

Action: HS to add to agenda for future Council meeting.

- 2.3 Barnet College – The London North Capital Finance Sub-committee met on 15th February and recommended the Barnet College In-principle Capital Application with 30% LSC support to the National Capital Committee (NCC). The NCC met on 27th February and has formally approved this recommendation. MVM thanked Council members of the sub-committee for their detailed consideration of the application and insistence on recommending a higher level of financial intervention. PL noted this as a specific example of the local Council adding value.

Item 3. Upper Lee Valley (ULV) Vision

- 3.1 AD introduced the ULV presentation to Council. ULV is a significant geographical area; starting at Stansted in the north running through the Thames Gateway to Stratford in the south. The NLSA's role is to look at the ULV in a north London context, to identify the key issues and act as an advocate for the area.
- 3.2 John McGill, Assistant Director at the NLSA, gave commentary on the ULV presentation. The ULV Vision is a high-level vision to try to change the public perception of the area and create enthusiasm for the redevelopment. The key points are:
- a. Central Leaside – This area is on the Edmonton/Tottenham/Walthamstow borders and is key to the ULV Vision. It is currently a dysfunctional, industrial area. Large-scale business, housing and leisure development of this area and improved transport links would create political and media interest. (Development at Kings Cross and Stratford (Olympics) is of current political interest.) The use of the strategic location and diverse workforce need to be maximised with the use of modern, flexible business premises.
 - b. Business – at the moment, the use of land designated for business in ULV is generally wasteful and it would be more beneficial to businesses if a greater proportion of the land was freehold rather than leasehold.
 - c. Transport – Rail, road and water currently provide transport links in a north-south direction and links need to be made from east to west. The proposal for 4-tracking is a major need in the area. Other proposals include improved bus routes; DLR extension to Leaside; Victoria line extension to Northumberland Park and Jubilee line extension to Leaside (and possibly further to Enfield).
 - d. Housing – Current housing is mostly Victorian or Edwardian and often close to industrial areas; this decreases property values. There are no major housing developments in the pipe-line and new property needs to be affordable and attractive to new and existing communities.
 - e. People – Employment levels are dropping and social pressures are increasing partly due to the increase in migration into the area. The needs of the people have to be integrated with business need. Town

centres need to be enhanced to provide leisure activities, employment and community focus. Improved access to the Lee Valley Park and innovative waterside developments would add to the leisure and employment offer and help create a better quality of life.

Comments:

- *It was queried that there were no estimates of the financial investment needed. JMcG answered that people's enthusiasm for the Vision was needed first before tackling any problems arising from the financial implications. It is currently being 'sold' as an idea rather than a delivery plan.*
- *It would be difficult to acquire land prior to the Olympics and we do not have a good record in this country for compulsory purchases.*
- *Political interest and money are needed to get these ideas moving.*
- *The waterside development could help improve housing and employment, as has been the case in Sheffield and Leeds.*
- *There are some poorly performing schools in the area – the profile of education should be raised. A sixth form centre could be added as all the focus is on an Academy.*
- *It is key to get the three boroughs (Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest) affected to work together. It was suggested an Urban Development Agency be established.*
- *NLSA stated that this was not an easy challenge, however LDA and GOL were interested and there had been a huge shift in enthusiasm for regeneration of the Enfield area. (Deprivation in the Enfield area in particular has worsened.)*
- *Suggested next steps were to create partnerships to encourage comfortable cross-borough working and an Enfield and Haringey Area Action Plan which relates to the Vision.*

Item 4. Local annual plan 2007/08

4.1 Following comments from local authorities, providers and the Council during the consultation period, key actions have been made clearer and some changes have been made to the challenges.

4.2 Ethnicity has been included as part of activities rather than as a specific section (see Local annual plan 2007/08 Key Actions 1.1, 1.3 and 2.4)

Decision: Council AGREED to endorse the Local Annual Plan 2007/08.

Item 5. Competitive tendering round 2007/08

5.1 SC explained that the funding available for the competitive tendering round was in addition to mainstream funding and will be used to expand provision we already have and engage with new providers. (Negotiations with providers for mainstream funding are still taking place.)

5.2 Basic skills, Employability for Jobcentre Plus customers, Apprenticeships, Work-based Learning, Skills for Jobs and Train to Gain were all being tendered for nationally. Capacity Building for Olympic requirements and a

Learning Agreement Pilot were being tendered for specifically in the London region.

- 5.3 After registering an interest, providers will be sent a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ). PQQs will be evaluated and successful providers will receive an Invitation to Tender (ITT). Regional detailed assessment and scoring of bids will then follow. It is hoped to contract with providers of successful ITTs on 1st August 2007. An e-portal is being used for this process to make it less paper intensive and bureaucratic.
- 5.4 LSC has taken a tough stance with poor provision and in the WBL sector providers are given a limited time under their contract to improve. Minimum Levels of Performance and Notice to Improve are being introduced to deal with poor provision in the FE sector. FE providers will have one year to improve. The tendering process will give other and new providers the opportunity to tender to provide better quality provision or expand their existing provision.
- 5.5 Concerns were raised about the capacity of the LSC to deal with this process since the staff restructuring. MVM explained that the regional contracts team were currently understaffed and secondments from local offices will be made to assist the regional team.
- 5.6 It was suggested that a risk assessment be carried out as there was a significant risk of timescales not being met and new providers being disaffected.

Item 6. Interim evaluation of LSC co-financed programme 2004-07

- 6.1 SC gave a presentation to Council members evaluating the ESF co-financed programme 2004-07. This is the final year of the current programme. We have contracted with 30 organisations for 52 projects.
- 6.2 We are on target with expenditure and to meet our projection of helping 12,000 learners, with 81% achieving a positive outcome. Some programmes have been gender specific for women only, however this does not appear to have had an impact on the overall gender split for achievement. Other programmes have been specifically for learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability. We still have work to do to include LDD learners generally on other programmes. More analysis on equality issues will be done at the end of the programme.
- 6.3 Many providers have struggled to find sufficient numbers of assessors. It was suggested that this maybe because tradesmen can earn more whilst working in their trade sector than they can as an assessor.

Action: SC to invite all providers to a meeting to discuss problem with assessor recruitment and training and ways to progress.

- 6.4 ESF contract managers have a good relationship with providers. There have been some audit issues as providers seem to be uncomfortable with asking to see copies of learners' passports to prove eligibility for a course. Distance travelled is not recorded which will need to be done in the future.
- 6.5 This programme is due to end in September 2007 and some funding has been made available to extend successful programmes to April 2008.

- 6.6 Chair suggested that it would be useful to compare the figures given as a percentage of the cohort or population. Also if there is a crowded 'market-place', that money is spent on worthwhile projects and does not duplicate what is already on offer.
- 6.7 *Comments:*
- a. *Little provision for helping disabled people to start their own business*
 - b. *Jobcentre Plus Pathways will hold work-purpose interviews with customers to review what they can and cannot do. Employment Support Allowance will replace Incapacity Benefit and help people get back to work. However this could prove difficult with those who have received Incapacity Benefit for a long period of time.*
 - c. *1% downturn in male achievement and a widening gap between male and female achievement rates.*
 - d. *Lack of measurability for distance travelled, however part of this problem is due to providers not completing all the data required on records. Recording distance travelled should be included in the tender and contract with future providers.*
- 6.8 A pan-London ESF staffing structure is being put into place and the impact on local ESF activity is being reviewed. It is likely that ESF will become a more centralised regional function. Local ESF function will be linked to the borough Partnership Teams.
- 6.9 The new ESF programme will be linked to working with the LDA and this is still work in progress. This will prevent LDA and LSC funding similar projects.

Item 7. Any other business

- 7.1 DP – Regional Audit Committee: Sixth form funding has been the subject of a major consultation exercise. From 2008/09 a plan-led funding system will be in place putting schools funding onto the same basis as FE, with the formula based on learning aims. Current funding is based on pupil count. Audit requirements will be toughened. The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) will remain in place. There will be no in-year recovery but allocations may be adjusted later. This will raise issues with schools and careful dialogue with local LSCs will need to take place to minimise any impact on the LSC's reputation.

Item 8. Date of next meeting

- 8.1 The next meeting will be on Friday 4th May, 08.30, at Dumayne House

Meeting chair	Peter Lyne
Minute taker	Hazel Sheridan
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