

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 20 July 2006
Subject Local Council
Location NetPark, Sedgefield
Time 16:00
LSC office County Durham
Publication intent Public

Present John Anstee (Chair); Brian Walker; Keith Hodgson; John Poland; John Widdowson; Gloria Willis; Mervyn Blades; Gerard Moran

In attendance John Reilly O'Donnell

LSC staff Tom Crompton; Linda Bailey; Nick James; Janet Skeen; Ann Jobson; Claire Catcheside

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
James Ramsbotham; Diane Morton; Alan Bilsborough;
Peter Cook; Christine Smith; Janice Bray; Dave Peebles;
Jo Swinburne; Val Goodrum

Item 1. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman reported:-

- 1.1 Linda Bailey was welcomed to her first Council meeting.
- 1.2 Ann Jobson was thanked for her hard work and commitment to the Council and Members and was wished well for the future as she leaves the LSC.
- 1.3 James Ramsbotham will stand down as Chair of local Council and is currently liaising with Chris Banks on his successor. James will continue to be a member of the Council. It was also confirmed that James has resigned as the Chair of Regional Board.

Item 2. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Item 3. Partnership Directors Report

3.1 Submitted: Paper by Linda Bailey providing members with an update on recent activity in County Durham LSC.

3.2 Capital Development

- East Durham & Houghall Community College is seeking to submit the final detailed capital application by the end of July
- A volunteer was requested for the local Capital Committee scheduled for 16 August to review the application - Brian Walker volunteered
- A member commented that he considered the process to be unsatisfactory and hurried. The Area Director agreed that the situation would be further investigated.
- The member commented that he thought it would be more beneficial for the College to wait until firm plans were in place before going to National Committee
- A member commented that delaying the development would have an implication on the future cost of the development
- The Chair suggested that Capital Committee consider the process and suggest ways to improve it in the future.

3.3 14-19 Diploma Gateway

- 14-19 Strategic Group in Durham prepared an expression of interest as a county consortium to deliver the first 5 diplomas at all 3 levels. The expression of interest was submitted to DfES on 7th July.

3.4 Train to Gain

- £5 million is available within Durham over two academic years
- The Partnership Director highlighted the opportunity for colleges and providers who have an existing allocation to gain further resources if their existing allocation is exhausted.

3.5 County Durham Children and Young People's Plan 2006-09

- The full plan was approved by the County Council in June 2006
- The LSC in County Durham has an important role to play in supporting the implementation of the Plan and its associated Action Plan.

3.6 Staffing structure

- The Partnership Director updated Members on appointments made at Durham and advised that there will be a strong team in place once all of the vacancies had been filled.

Item 4. Area Directors Report

4.1 Train to Gain update

- It was emphasised that Train to Gain is the driver to bring new provision into the market and that collaboration is beginning to take place.

4.2 Collaboration in the delivery of 14-19 learning provision

South West

- Discussions are taking place amongst schools, college and work-based learning providers regarding reconfiguring 14-19 provision with a view to the creation of some form of federation.

Derwentside

- Area Director and Partnership Director met recently with Kevin Jones MP, Hilary Armstrong MP and partners in Derwentside to discuss the future delivery of learning provision
- The LSC and LA are leading a review of options, working closely with schools, Derwentside College, Derwentside District Council and work-based learning providers
- The Area Director stressed that any organisation working in isolation will find it increasingly difficult to deliver the 14-19 agenda and that collaboration is essential.

East

- The Local Authority is currently consulting on a proposal for the reconfiguration of schools in Peterlee. The LSC has responded in support of the LA preferred option
- A member commented that the LSC in the region need to give consideration to all BSF plans and ensure alignment with LSC capital investment
- The strong partnership between Children's Services and County Council was highlighted.

Decision: Options and recommendations will be brought to the Council for consideration

Action: Tom Crompton / Linda Bailey

Item 5. Future Role of LSC Regional Board and Local Councils

- 5.1 Submitted: Paper by Tom Crompton updating the Council on recent discussions regarding the new accountability structure for the LSC.
- 5.2 Proposed changes to accountability are in response to the FE White Paper.
- 5.3 A recommendation from Chris Banks, National Chair will be put to ministers and the outcome will be included within the Education Bill next year.
- 5.4 The final recommendation is expected at the end of July.
- 5.5 Future challenges include how to continue to gain active involvement of key stakeholders locally.
- 5.6 The Area Director and Chair emphasised that the Council needs to continue with 'business as usual' in order to run effectively over the next 12 months.
- 5.7 Statutory commitments will continue to exist.
- 5.8 The paper and recommendations were debated.
- 5.9 Some members expressed they felt we were moving from a local to regional 'voice' and ultimately there would be a loss of local accountability, local expertise and local links.
- 5.10 Members considered how they could ensure Durham is represented on the Regional Board.
- 5.11 The concept of 'local skills boards' as mentioned in the paper from Chris Banks was discussed.
- 5.12 The Chair emphasised the importance of having appropriate membership in the interim period.

Decision: That existing members continue for the next 12 months and anyone whose term of appointment which needs to be extended should be

Action: Claire Catcheside

- 5.13 Area Director re-iterated that statutory responsibility is likely to transfer to the Regional Board, and the Chair of the Regional Board needs to ensure they have people who represent local issues for County Durham.
- 5.14 Area Director asked members to consider how we can bring a local voice to the table?

Decision: Views of members to be communicated - 'local skills boards' are not the best way forward and we should consider utilising current existing partnership groups such as the 14-19 group.

Action: Tom Crompton

- 5.15 Area Director indicated to members that their views and debates were not dissimilar to the views of Tees Valley Council members.

Item 6. Performance Update

- 6.1 Submitted: Paper by Janet Skeen providing an update on the LSC performance in County Durham

Decision: That the report be received.

Item 7. Any other business

7.1 John Poland reported that:

7.2 Audit Committee had taken place and did not meet quorum.

- Concerns were raised regarding debtors, specifically;
 - Auckland Training had ceased trading but funds had been recovered
 - STAR Consultancy: there is a potential deficit of £408k across the region, only a small part of this attributed to LSC County Durham
 - Committee felt that the system for monitoring financial state of providers is not adequately robust.

Decision: That the Executive team to discuss mechanisms to address these issues

Action: Tom Crompton / Linda Bailey

7.3 Audit Committee asked members to consider recommendation that they be disbanded and that the function will transfer to the Regional Audit Committee once formed, and in the meantime responsibility lies with the Local Council.

Decision: Members endorsed the recommendation

Action: Tom Crompton

7.4 Congratulations were given to New College Durham on receiving a Grade 2

Item 8. Date and time of next meeting

8.1 12 October 2006 at 4.00pm

Publication no.

Meeting chair

Minute taker

Date created

Document ref.

John Anstee

Claire Catcheside

7 August 2006

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