

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date	19 September 2007
Subject	LSC Northumberland Council
Location	Main Conference Room
Time	16:00
LSC office	Northumberland
Publication intent	Internal

Present	Jackie Axelby Mary Dunning Robert Evans Linda Ions Terry Robson Sue Wilson Veronica Dunn John Wayman
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LSC staff	Tony Sacco Lee Thurman Janice Green John Egan Susan Milburn
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Apologies	Apologies have been received from: Jane Blackburn Kelvin Brennan Moir Rankin Mark Henderson Austin McNamara Fred Foster
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Item 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

Item 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2007

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2007 were accepted as a true record.

Item 3. Matters arising/actions

- 3.1 Attention was drawn to the updated action notes. All actions were either on the agenda or completed.

Item 4. Comments from the Chair

- 4.1 The Chair updated members on the meetings recently attended:
NSP Board meeting – the Community Strategy is moving forward
FACT Board meeting – a review of the Board is required and this will be reported back to the NSP Board.
- 4.2 Council Event – the Chair reminded members of the event and asked that transport arrangements be made after the meeting.
- 4.3 Northumberland Event – the Chair suggested a date of Wednesday 5th December to hold this event. Venue to be Horton Grange. Members were asked to note this date in their diaries. Further details to follow.
- 4.4 Changes to Machinery of Government – Subject to the FE bill, Queens Speech and Royal Assent all going through Parliament, from November 2007 National Council will move some of their delegated powers from Local Councils to the Regional Interim Board, namely:
- (i) Proposals for the establishment or dissolution of FE Corporations
 - (ii) Making proposals to change the organisation of a school with regard to school sixth form provision
 - (iii) Endorsing Capital Proposals for approval
- Local Councils by statute will remain until final dissolution.
- 4.5 It was noted that this may therefore be the last meeting of the Council but members were asked to retain the date of 21 November at this stage

Item 5. Comments from the Area Director

- 5.1 From 6th November 2007 the Education Select Committee will be disbanded and replaced by 2 new committees, one for each of the new Departments, both of which Mark Haysom will be required to attend.
- 5.2 City Region – the launch of the City Region has been delayed as a consequence of the Sub National Review but recruitment of a City Region Director will still go ahead. The LSC is well represented on the City Region Partnership and at Board level.
- 5.3 ESF – there is £2 billion available nationally to support job search, advice, basic skills and vocational qualifications. The LSC has applied to become a co-financing organisation along with the 2 City Regions (who have subsequently withdrawn) and Newcastle City Council, whose situation is unclear at the moment.
- 5.4 IIP – following a disappointing first assessment the LSC has been formally assessed and recommended for the IIP standard subject to moderation. The Chair congratulated the LSC on this achievement.

Item 6. Paper NLSC 15/2007 Partnership Directors Update

The Partnership Director talked through his paper making the following points:

6.1 Machinery of Government changes

14-19 funding – the North East Regional Director and other members of the Regional Management Group are working with the new Departments on the transition of funding to local authorities.

Northumberland Partnership Team – from 24th September 2007 the team will be based at Moongate House. It is hoped that this move will strengthen links with Area North and Regional Colleagues. Partner organisations have offered to provide 'hot-desking' arrangements for LSC staff.

The Partnership Director assured members that it will be very much 'business as usual' and no changes should be apparent to partners. Meetings will take place in Northumberland and again partner organisations have been generous with offering their facilities.

6.2 Work Based Learning – following the recent tendering process

Northumberland now has a broader base of E2E providers, which should have a positive impact on the NEET figures for the County. These providers will all be monitored but not necessarily by the Northumberland team.

6.3 14-19 Developments – KSA Partnership have been appointed to carry out a review of the County's 14-19 Strategy and Structures. The process of Gateway submissions has been agreed by the Interim Strategy Group.

6.4 Berwick – some very positive developments have been made and key partners are very much on board linking with the work of the Berwick Future Regeneration Strategy to ensure that a broader range of provision is offered at a wider choice of learning facilities throughout Berwick.

6.5 Connexions tendering process – the outcome of the tendering process will be announced in November 2007

6.6 Aspire – it was observed that there was uncertainty about the current activity of Aspire

Action point: Area Director North to seek clarification on the current position with Aspire and inform Council Members by letter

Item 7. Paper NLSC 16/2007 Northumberland College Developments

7.1 Lee Thurman, Partnership Manager, informed members that the College was within £3,000 of their allocation. This puts the College in a strong position for next year's allocation.

7.2 Train to Gain figures are very good but this performance needs to be maintained.

7.3 Apprenticeship figures must be closely monitored as they are very near to the Minimum Level of Performance threshold of 45%

7.4 The College to be encouraged to access the funding available as a CoVE organisation for the New Standard, which will help to raise the reputation and credibility of the College.

- 7.5 Summer works have made a huge difference to the College's interior and will help to attract more students.
- 7.6 The recommendation to undertake an ILR audit will be considered by the College Audit Committee at its next meeting.
- 7.7 Overall, this was considered to be a very positive report and a vast improvement on the picture a few years ago. The work of the Special Committee has been very successful and the level of evidence-based information will be maintained by the Partnership team.
- 7.8 On behalf of the Council, the Chair expressed her pleasure on the progress and improvements made. The robust relationship between the College and the LSC will ensure that support and challenge to the College are continued to be made. The Partnership Director was asked to feed back to the College Principal on the views of the meeting.

Item 8. Paper NLSC 17/2007 Joint Area Review (JAR)

- 8.1 Janice Green, Partnership Manager, informed members of the LSC's involvement throughout the Joint Area Review process.
- 8.2 The outcome had been a positive report which graded 3 (good) overall with several clear recommendations being made, particularly relating to LLDD learners.
- 8.3 From this an action plan will be prepared which should only strengthen and improve the already good relationships with the Local Authority and partnerships.

Item 9. Paper NLSC 18/2007 Post-16 Learner Participation and Travel to Learn Patterns in Northumberland

- 9.1 Following a suggestion from the Special Committee the Partnership team and the Regional Data team have been analysing information about young people who live in the County, particularly regarding participation levels and travel to learn patterns.
- 9.2 The collation and interpretation of information can differ greatly between organisations and it is clear that we don't have the whole picture and that more interrogation of the data is required.
- 9.3 A key element of the presentation identified which areas of the county had the highest 16-19 participation rates. Figures were also presented on the Colleges attended by Northumberland learners.
- 9.4 Council members were surprised at the degree of travel that learners are willing to make with students travelling as far as Stockton College to undertake their studies. This trend almost mirrors the employment figures for Northumberland with 48% of workers travelling outside of the county to their place of work.
- 9.5 This information prompts some further questions such as:
How many learners are coming from other areas into Northumberland to learn?

How does this information influence the Partnership team and what benefits/opportunities can it bring?

9.6 Further work on this is required and the Partnership Director is keen to bring key partners together to form a data group to try to gain a better understanding of participation, achievement and travel to learn patterns.

Item 10. Update of Skills Policy Issues

John Egan, Skills Development Director provided members with an update on a wide range of aspects of the Skills agenda including:

- Leitch – still a lot of work to be undertaken on the implementation of the complex recommendations and targets to support world class skills and increase economic participation
- The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) focuses on the LSC priorities, driving the Skills agenda forward. The Regional Employability Framework (REF) aims to bring together the agencies to align funding and share data
- Train to Gain – North East region is performing well. Business Link provides the Skills brokerage for the programme. Northumberland has the highest take up at Level 2 and 3 provision
- Skills inclusion
 - Skills for Jobs – aims to get workless people into training and ultimately a job
 - OLASS – prospectus has recently been published and is currently open for consultation. It will explore how there can be better access to FE mainstream provision and if this can have an impact on reducing the number of re-offenders.
 - IAG –Next Steps service progressing well. Adult Careers Service is being developed Nationally
 - Skills for Life – the PSA target is strong, but this will be revised in light of the Leitch Implementation plan
- Sectors and Specialist Provision
 - The role of the Sector Skills Council is growing
 - the Sector team supports the Partnership teams by providing data and intelligence on their local area. This information provides a regional analysis which informs the commissioning plan and future open and competitive tendering bids.
 - New Standard – this will not be owned or funded by the LSC but builds on the successful reputation of CoVEs and will be based on what employers value as important
 - National Skills Academies – currently developing Financial Services, Manufacturing and Food and Drink academies.

Item 11. Future Arrangements

11.1 Covered under agenda items 4&5

Close

The Chair looked forward to seeing members again at the Council Event on 20th September and the Northumberland Council event on the 5th December.

Thanks were expressed to Council members and LSC staff for their work over the years and assurance was given that they will be kept informed about developments regarding the dissolution of Local Councils.

Meeting chair	Jackie Axelby
Minute taker	Susan Milburn
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