

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 23 May 2006
Subject Local Council Meeting
Location Stainton Room
Time 08:30
LSC office Tees Valley
Publication intent Internal

Present Mr T Dabbs (Chair)
Mr T Crompton
Mr K Cranney
Mr J Fitzpatrick
Mr J Hogg
Mrs P Osborne
Mr M Pearson
Ms P Whaley

In attendance Mr S Davidson, Jobcentre Plus

LSC staff Mrs P Lynn, Head of Skills and Provider Development
Mr J Rowan, Director of Learning and Skills
Mrs D Springett, Council Secretary

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Mr J Arthur, Council Member
Ms G Dobson, Head of Finance and Governance
Mrs A Haskins, Council Member
Mr J Hughes, Council Member
Mr D Irwin, Connexions
Mr A Jones, Head of Planning and Performance
Mr R Mallon, Council Member
Mrs H Pickering, Council Member
Mr M Taylor, Business Link Tees Valley
Mr Wallace, Head of Policy and Research
Mr I Williams, Council Member

Item 1. Theme 7 – Council Members only

The Chair began by explaining that there were two elements to Theme 7 to be discussed:

1.1 **Appointment of Area Director** The Chair began by explaining the process for the appointment of the Band 5 roles. Members were reminded

that there was a national role structure and that Executive Directors at Band 5 would have to apply for posts and that there were four available in the North East – Area Director North or South, Planning and Skills roles.

Candidates were required to:

- sit two exams - one hour ability test and one hour on business acumen;
- prepare a 20 minute presentation after being given an unseen title;
- present presentation to a panel;
- undertake competency based interview with Regional Director and HR Business Partner which lasted over an hour. This consisted of 10 minute presentation followed by a list of questions around Building Relationships, Knowledge, Skills and Experience;
- undertake an additional competency interview with a panel of the North East Chairs and Regional Director.

The marks from these five stages were collated and compared against a nationally-set thresh-hold. Candidates had to achieve three for the competency interview with the panel of Chairs to be appointable.

Council Members were informed that the role description for an Area Director was clearly different from the Executive Director role and that seven candidates were interviewed for the role of Area Director (three existing Executive Directors and four Band 4 employees).

- 1.2 **Non Executive Structure** A note from Chris Banks, National Chairman, was circulated to members regarding a new streamlined LSC accountability structure.

The chair gave a brief overview of the current non-executive structure and explained the FE White Paper included proposals for change to the current structure of the 47 Local LSC Councils. Ministers have asked the LSC to produce preliminary recommendations by the beginning of July. The Regional Board proposed to discuss this at its meeting scheduled for Thursday 25 May with a proposal being submitted to the next national Chairs meeting and a final proposal to 21 July National Council Meeting.

Council Members were keen to continue in their roles during this transition period and would support any proposal that ensured the interest of Tees Valley was continued.

The Area Director explained that the structure was moving forward towards more regional governance with approximately half a billion budget for the North East. Decisions could not be made at regional level on local issues.

Members were advised that there were five Partnership Directors, one for each of the boroughs, in the new structure and that the Area Director was keen to know how Council Members could link up with them.

Members were told that the White Paper would mean that huge local decisions would need to be made on how to manage the infrastructure in the Tees Valley.

The Area Director had recently met with Hilary Armstrong MP, Minister of State, Cabinet Office, and reported that she is looking to work locally on the inclusion agenda and protecting learners.

Item 2. Welcome and Apologies

- 2.1 The new Area Director, South, Tom Crompton, was welcomed and apologies noted. Members were advised that the Area Director, South, took over the Executive Director's position on the local council.

Noted

Item 3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest declared at the beginning of the meeting; however Mr Hogg did declare an interest under Item 9.

Noted

Item 4. Minutes of last meeting

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2006 were accepted as a true record.

Noted

Item 5. Matters arising

- 5.1 All matters arising from the meeting held on 15 March 2006 had been actioned.
- 5.2 **Regional Board** The Chair advised that the next Regional Board Meeting would be on the future structure of Regional Board and local councils. He felt that the Regional Board would be enlarged and would take on the statutory role of local councils in the future.

Item 6. Train to Gain

- 6.1 A copy of the presentation was circulated. Mrs Lynn covered the background to Train to Gain and outlined the aims, objectives and the North East Vision. The main objective of the service was to shift from supply to demand led. Members were advised that the Leitch Report has been a major driving force for this service. It was agreed that the Executive Summary of the Leitch Report would be circulated to members and that it would be an agenda item for the 18 July 2006 local council meeting.

Action: Council Secretary

- 6.2 Members were informed that there was £18m core funding along with additional funding. In trying to balance up supply and demand funding was capped at £0.5m for any one provider. There were three forms of funding available:
1. Further Education mainstream funding.
 2. 80% out to tender, maximum contract value over 2 years is £0.5m, minimum £200k.
 3. 20% rapid response. This would be used to respond to employers needs provided they use brokerage service.
- 6.3 Members were advised that in April 2006 there were 300 employers accessing the service, 248 were in the hard to reach category with over 50% of them through brokerage.

6.4 There were implications for Tees Valley on how the structure is best organised.

Item 7. FE Reform: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances

7.1 An Executive Summary of the FE Reform was included in the meeting papers. The FE Reform supported Train to Gain and talked about the skills needs of the nation as well as meeting the needs of employers. Again the emphasis is on demand led rather than supply driven.

7.2 Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 46 of the Executive Summary which detailed that by 2008 there would be a new dynamism within the FE system.

Item 8. Chair's Report

8.1 **Meeting with Chairs of Colleges** The Chair advised he and the Area Director would be meeting separately the Chairs of General Further Education and 6th Form Colleges to discuss the proposed FE White Paper.

8.2 **Tees Valley Summit** The Chair reported he had attended a brief meeting with Ruth Kelly MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who had been interested in transport, communications, planning and development issues.

Item 9. Directors' Report

9.1 **Six Month Review** The Area Director reported that performance was solid and that there were no areas for concern. The key areas discussed were capacity, size, value for money and flexibility for the future.

9.2 **Prior Pursglove** Mr Hogg declared an interest in this item. Prior Pursglove have written to the Area Director asking whether the LSC Tees Valley would reconsider its decision on the West of Redcar and Cleveland Collaborative Sixth Form proposal. Their request was in response to the FE White Paper and that there could be significant implications on the numbers of the college. The Area Director has requested an urgent Case Conference on this area.

Noted

9.3 **Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)** Members wished to ensure that funding continues to be available to address the number of 16 – 18 year olds on the NEET lists. Mr Davidson advised that due to changes in data protection Jobcentre Plus and Connexions were looking to now share information so that engagement can take place. It was noted that the gathering of data was easy; however it was more difficult to action.

(Mr Hogg left at 11.15 am)

Item 10. Finance and Budget

10.1 There were no issues regarding the Finance and Business report raised.

Item 11. Any other business

11.1 **Adult Learners' Week** Ms Whaley reminded members that it was Adult Learners' Week. She thanked Mrs Lynn for her contribution at the opening ceremony and the regional LSCs for their support.

11.2 **Audit & Quality Committee and Local Capital Meetings** The chair thanked Ms Whaley for chairing these two meetings.

11.3 **Director of Learning and Skills** Council Members formally thanked Mr Rowan for his support over the years and wished him the very best for the future.

11.4 There was no further business and the meeting closed at 11.30 am.

Item 12. Schedule of future meetings

12.1 The scheduled of future meetings has been circulated with the papers.

Item 13. Date of next meeting

13.1 The next local council meeting will take place on Tuesday 18 July 2006, 08.30 – 12.00 in the Stainton Room, LSC Tees Valley. This was later changed to Tuesday 4 July 2006, 08.30 – 11.30.

Meeting chair	Terry Dabbs
Minute taker	Deborah Springett
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