

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL CUMBRIA

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 MAY 2004 AT
THE WESTMORLAND HOTEL, TEBAY, COMMENCING AT 2.30 P.M.**

Present:

Council:

Rob Cairns (RC)
Victoria Ashfield (VA)
Anne Diss (AD)
Mick Farley (MF)
Cath Fare (CF)
Pat Glenday (PG)
Chris l'Anson (CI)
Peter Irving (PI)
Rob Johnston (RJ)
Graham Lamont (GL)
Jack Stopforth (JS)
Mike Thorpe (MT)
John Weir (JW)

Observers:

Nigel Burke (NB)
Mick Carey (MC)
Brian Lightowler (BL)
Siân Rees (SR)

In attendance:

Steven Broomhead (for Agenda item 3) (SB)
Lindsay Harford (LH)
Jon Power (JP)
Elspeth Smith

	ACTION
<p>1. <u>Apologies and Introductions</u></p> <p>Apologies – Council – Norman Burrow, Tricia Calway, Mike Smith. Observers – None</p> <p>2. <u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Rob Cairns West Lakes Renaissance Victoria Ashfield LEA Anne Diss Voluntary Sector Cath Fare Kendal College Pat Glenday Lakes College-West Cumbria Chris l'Anson WBL, IAG, ESF Peter Irving CITB, Sector Skills Council Rob Johnston NWDA Graham Lamont FE Colleges Jack Stopforth Kendal College, Cumbria Vision, Business Link Mike Thorpe TUC, Kendal College John Weir Voluntary Sector</p>	
<p>3. <u>Steven Broomhead, Chief Executive of NWDA</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Steven Broomhead to the meeting and invited him to say</p>	

a few words to those present. Steven Broomhead thanked LSC Cumbria for the opportunity to discuss the work of the NWDA. His main topics were:

- Sustainable economic development for the region;
- Strategic view on how best to spend and invest funds;
- Strong involvement in skills agenda.

Council were then invited to engage in a discussion with Mr Broomhead.

JS – The LSCs in the North West are concerned as to the NWDA's intentions towards them – are its intentions honourable?

SB – replied that the 'rumour' that the Agency wanted to create a turf war is untrue. We must all work together to deliver the promise of the Skills White Paper in the region. He welcomed the appointment of John Korzeniewski. He believed that the clarity of purpose of the LSC was now coming through and that good arrangements were now developing between the two organisations.

JS – Concerned that the ASP was an imposition from on high. Still a lot of disquiet in the North West LSCs as to where the whole exercise will take us. Wherever it might be, the LLSCs would like to know.

SB – A three-year concordat has been set up which will give absolute clarity of the direction the ASP/LSC is heading.

MT – If an Elected Regional Assembly comes to fruition where will the RDA lie?

SB – The NWDA does not have statutory powers to 'take over' the LSC.

CF – Cumbria Vision – where has it come from? How does it help the LSC? Is it just another partnership?

SB – The Cumbria Vision has come from the RDA. The Agency would have preferred it to come from the County Council. The purpose of the group is to provide a real focus to deal with major issues such as Carlisle Airport and HE in Cumbria. He added that the Agency might decide to put resources for Cumbria through it. It will be a sharp, focussed Board and Mick Farley is a member.

AD – There is a lack of representation from the voluntary and community sector. How could the proposal have got this far without that representation?

SB – Happy to take this matter up and feedback to Council.

CF – Sector Skills Council – engaging employers – what is the commitment from the Agency?

SB – The Agency is signing a licence with each one as they become live to ensure proper employer engagement.

MT - CASP – concerned about the lack of a relationship between the ASP and the RSP.

SB – No easy answer, need to get good communication channels open and to remember that the RSP has only had one meeting to date.

FE Capital – the LSC has a significant investment in FE capital, the Agency is also sometimes approached to contribute to any gap in funding – however we need to develop a coherent strategy – this is an example of where the ASP could become involved.

JW – pointed out that there are other learning organisations other than FE Colleges which are looking for funding.

SB – Noted – it should become a skills capital strategy rather than a FE capital strategy.

GL – pointed out that we now have a successful College Collaboration Task Group and it would be most helpful to have a clear policy.

PG – made an observation that, as demonstrated in the College Collaboration Task Group, the County does not only have to work regionally, sub-regionally and locally but also funding bodies have to be aware of the differences within the County itself.

JW – what questions would SB have asked if he were on the Council?

SB – “Is this the structure we want for the future and how do we work together?” He would have also asked about quality of services and about the significance of the Adult Basic Skills agenda. He added that good work had already taken place by the LSC/Colleges on Adult Basic Skills. The Agency would be putting £1M into a project to provide funding for more good quality tutors.

He also mentioned that say, in Barrow, the Agency would work with the LSC to help ameliorate the possible loss of world-class design skills.

AD – expressed sympathy with the Agency over the challenge in Barrow. She added that Barrow had the capacity to be one of the best tourist attractions in the North West or it could simply bleed to death. The in-fighting of various agencies did not help the situation.

SB – the NWDA is up for the challenge and he said that Cumbria Vision is not just another agency.

JS – thought that the growth of the agencies is not the cause of the problems in Barrow but, like Sellafield, he felt it was a government procurement problem. He added that Cumbria was fighting its corner for nuclear, shipbuilding and farming/food but it was like re-arranging the chairs on the Titanic.

SB – felt there was still a need for rationalisation.

RJ – the LSC could use SB to filter information regarding Cumbria through to those in Government to try to influence the future for investment/employment in the County.

BL – added that our ability to influence will be greater enhanced with the closer working relationships evolving with the major agencies i.e. LSC/JC+/Connexions/BL/Colleges.

SB – The Agency is more involved in this area than any other. ASP has an extra £6M investment giving it a total of £18M. We must align our financial strategy with the regional strategy.

RJ – Customers within the County need to understand the link between ASP and LSC. ASP catalogue being sent out in hard copy.

MT – Surely an electronic version would have been cheaper?

CI – Liked the idea of all agencies working more closely together but whilst the individual agencies have different drivers how can we do this?

<p>SB – More confident and now we have the joint business cycle coming into being; agreeing and simplifying targets should have a major impact.</p> <p>NB – Although clear and coherent strategies do exist when these get translated to targets and measures they don't always fit the strategy. There is now a sea-change taking place with a plethora of targets needing to be achieved.</p> <p>There were no further questions or points from Council.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Steven Broomhead for coming to Cumbria and wished him the best of luck with Barrow and West Cumbria in particular. He reminded Steven to use the local LSC as a resource.</p> <p>Steven Broomhead appreciated the Chair's comments and added that as this was Adult Learner's Week he felt that today had been a good learning experience.</p>	
<p>4. <u>Notes of the previous Council meeting held on Wednesday 24 March 2004</u></p> <p>These were accepted as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p>5. <u>Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda</u></p> <p>Notes of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group –Cluster Group had not met since the last Council meeting. To be carried over.</p>	<p>MF</p>
<p>6. <u>Notes of Audit Committee meeting held on 24 March 2004 and 19 May 2004</u></p> <p>Peter Irving outlined the minutes of the meeting of 24 March and gave verbal feedback on the meeting which had been held prior to Council. He expressed his disappointment that the meeting had once again been inquorate, as this does not reflect well, especially when staff have come from the regional PFA team.</p> <p>He thanked all those concerned on the level 2 score for the internal audit.</p> <p>He requested some further volunteers to join the Audit Committee. GL, MT and JW all expressed an interest.</p> <p>The minutes were then accepted as a true record.</p>	
<p>7. <u>Executive Director's Report</u></p> <p>The Executive Director outlined his report.</p> <p>Learning Carlisle - It would be helpful if a member of Council could attend the Strategy Group of the Learning Carlisle meeting on 27 May 2004. Members to note.</p> <p>Barrow-in-Furness/BAE – Members noted that Mick had sent an excellent reply to John Hutton's enquiry. No direct response had, as yet, been received, although John Korzeniewski had become involved.</p> <p>Administration Budgets: regional and local structures – MF stressed that closer collaboration amongst the five LLSCs in the region could affect staffing dependent on which leads each LSC takes. However, no compulsory redundancies are foreseen in Cumbria.</p>	

<p>Performance Review – Members asked why no providers came within the excellent category. MF replied that due to the history of many providers it was a credit that none were still in serious concerns. Obviously, for the future, we would look to have providers in the excellent category.</p> <p>Learning Themepark – those Council members who attended the event at the Reebok Stadium felt that it was poor, especially compared to the success of the local event. They felt that the Cumbrian presentation did not reflect the good work that had been achieved. Members also questioned the value for money aspect of these events and if they would replace Careers events.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Learning Themepark was another tool to persuade young people to continue in their education (whether through FE or the vocational route) and they would not replace Careers events. It was agreed that perhaps some more preparation should have been done before the event itself to ensure that young people would get as much out of the learning experience as possible.</p> <p>Cumbria Vision Board – All present congratulated Mick on his appointment to the Board. Members requested a list of Board members.</p>	ES
<p>8. <u>Carlisle College Capital</u></p> <p>It was confirmed that the LSC contribution of 40% of the costs would not increase if the original sum quoted was increased during construction.</p> <p>The paper was duly noted.</p>	
<p>9. <u>College Collaboration</u></p> <p>GL gave Council members a short update of progress so far. He read out the following statement:</p> <p>“At a meeting of Cumbria Collaboration Task Group on 13 May 2004 representatives of the LLSC and the Principals and Chairs of Governors of the four Further Education Colleges in Cumbria, it was agreed, in principle, that the colleges should embark upon a major project of managed collaboration over an initial three-year period but with the expectation of a permanent arrangement. The project will be managed initially by Reg Chapman, formerly Principal of Blackpool and the Fylde College and will incorporate both support and academic functions. Subject to agreement on the proposed timescales by the LLSC it is expected that the four Governing Bodies will agree to take part in this innovative and unique collaboration at their respective meetings early this summer and that the project will be endorsed by the LLSC at its July meeting.”</p> <p>The paper was duly noted.</p>	
<p>10. <u>Budgets</u></p> <p>The Executive Director outlined the paper, plus the additional tabled paper. Council members wished to record their disappointment in the budget cuts, especially the marketing share.</p> <p>The paper was duly noted.</p>	
<p>11. <u>Cumbrian Strategy</u></p> <p>For information. The paper was duly noted.</p>	

<p>12. <u>Employer Skills Offer</u></p> <p>For information. The paper was duly noted.</p>	
<p>13. <u>Any other urgent business</u></p> <p>The Executive Director confirmed that the papers sent electronically, via the National Chair's office, were for information only and any comments should be sent to him.</p>	
<p>14. <u>Date of next meeting</u></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 21 July 2004 at the Workington office, commencing at 2.30 p.m.</p>	

Signed..... Date.....