

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 19/20 September 2006
Subject Council meeting
Location Preston Marriott Hotel
Time 1600 hours
LSC office Lancashire
Publication intent Internal

Present Mike Collier
Ian Haworth
Nancy Cookson
Tony Gill
Clive Memmott
Peter Neill
Karen O'Donoghue
Alan Roff
Alison Wolstenholme

In attendance Neil Shaw - EKOS Consulting
Administrator - EKOS Consulting

LSC staff Dave Cresswell
Abdus Wadee
Sandra Whyte
Bev Watson

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Nigel Burke
Joan Lee
Alyson Malach
Ray McManus
Iqbal Memon
John Moverley
Khalid Saifullah
Greg Turner

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Mike Collier welcomed all present. Ian Haworth ran through the Agenda for the next two days. As new Area Director for Lancashire LSC, Ian Haworth gave the Council a brief history of his career prior to joining the LSC. He said

he has spent the first week at Lancs LSC conducting 1-1s with staff and has been most impressed with the level of expertise within the office.

Item 2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising:

6.2 The Burnley College Capital Project sub-committee met earlier today at the College site. See item 4.

Item 3. Framework for Excellence

3.1 Sandra Whyte talked through the framework. The framework will support accountability and is a move towards more self regulation. It is a means of assessing risk, bringing together inspection and a combination of tools. There are three key dimensions: responsiveness, equality and finance. The framework will be implemented over the next three years, with 06/07 performance being the first measured. Following a review of 06/07 performance, the first evidence will be available in Spring 2008.

3.2 The Council went on to discuss the merits of the framework. It was felt that the framework would provide a benchmark by which the colleges would be judged. Non performance would result in a statutory notice to improve. The standard will apply to both FE and WBL. It was felt there will be some sensitivities around the financial aspects i.e. financial health.

3.3 The Chair asked Sandra Whyte who would be responsible for operating the system. Sandra replied saying we would all have a part to play. The local office will issue any warning notices to improve.

Item 4. Burnley College Capital Project

4.1 There was a meeting of the Capital Project sub committee immediately prior to the Council meeting discussing the building of a new college in Burnley. The Council then went on to discuss the build costs for the project. A larger contribution has been secured from NWDA which has reduced the LSC portion of the total capital outlay to 57%.

4.2 Abdus Wadee to send an update from the Capital sub committee to the Council members.

Action: AW

4.3 Three different sites were viewed, ultimately the best option was to go for a single site solution. Accessibility was a key concern, it was preferable that a train station be within reasonable walking distance. The configuration is important; with the need for a 6th form centre, adult skills section and HE centre. The sub-committee recommends that the current proposal is accepted. The next stage is to submit the proposal to the National Capital Committee next month.

Nancy Cookson asked who would fund any overspend on the project. The Chair responded by saying that a contingency is built in to the costs.

- 4.4 Abdus Wadee said that it had been a major achievement securing funding of £9.9M from the NWDA.
- 4.5 The Chair said he would like to see checks by the LSC built into the contract to review the cost accuracy immediately before start on site and then to monitor progress against cost as the project was built out. Support will be required from the regional property team.
- 4.6 Tony Gill asked Ian Haworth to approach the region with a view to them outlining the level of support that will be forthcoming from them.

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Item 5. New Model for The LSC

- 5.1 Sandra Whyte talked through the local perspective of the Model for the Future LSC. Partnership focus is fundamental to the new model, core business processes and annual cycle should be aligned to that of our partners so we are in time to influence business decisions.
- 5.2 The new monitoring system P.A.M. will be delivered early October 2006.
- 5.3 Tony Gill said that the most challenging aspect locally would be how we engage with the Lancashire Economic Partnership.
- 5.4 The Council felt that there were a number of issues specific to the north west region which weren't addressed in the new model. In particular the 16-19 agenda in Lancashire.
- 5.5 Streamlining LSC Accountability – As the Regional Boards are to become the LSC's formal decision-making bodies below the National Council, the statutory requirement under the Learning and Skills Act to establish Local Councils is removed. Timescale – submission of formal advice to Ministers at the beginning of October. It is likely that they will respond formally in November. Until such changes are made the LSC Local Council will remain in place.

Item 6. Area Director's Report

- 6.1 Ian Haworth went through the main points of the report.
- 6.2 Ian then talked through a recently published report on SATS results, outlining some of the differences in achievement, particularly in English, between the genders. Ian went on to highlight the difference in salary between graduate and non-graduate staff.
- 6.3 Sandra Whyte then talked to the Council about GCSE results, comparing the County with the national averages.
- 6.4 Ian Haworth informed the Council that Roger Taylor, the National Property Director is making a presentation to staff on 27 September outlining proposals for new office premises and will be visiting a number of possible locations.

Item 7. Provider Excellence

- 7.1 Sandra Whyte gave an update on Skelmersdale College. The College had been failing to meet the learner numbers with classes not being a viable size

and there had been issues around data collection. Numbers were small for A level participation, but there are two local schools also delivering A levels. Skelmersdale College did not make full use of the systems available to them when they went into difficulties and by reducing staff numbers they limited the range of curriculum.

- 7.2 Tribal were brought in two years ago, funded by the LSC.
- 7.3 The Chair voiced concerns that the situation was allowed to happen but it was explained that despite the LSC alerting OfSTED in the early stages, they had not received the backing required. OfSTED gave the college a grade 3 which brought further problems as the college believed they were performing satisfactorily. Lancashire Principals Group had offered support but this was not taken up
- 7.4 The LSC had put extra monetary resources into the college and commissioned an independent financial review.
- 7.5 Nancy Cookson expressed concerns that the funding methodology was weighted in favour of HE provision as opposed to FE provision. It will prove difficult for Colleges in the future when the emphasis changes back to FE and the colleges have to change direction.
- 7.6 The Chair asked Nancy Cookson if she would ask the Lancashire Principal's Group to identify one area which the colleges would like the LSC to help them with.

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- 8.7 Sandra Whyte informed the Council of the criteria on which they are going to judge prospective merger partners.

- 8.8 Timescale: Ideally by Christmas at the latest the governing body will have interviewed and identified the merger body.

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Item 8. Lancashire Skills Strategy

- 8.1 The following paragraph from the action plan summarises "In overall terms, not only is the profile of resident skills 'tilted' against emerging skills requirements within the sub-region – with insufficient higher level and an excess of unskilled workers – but there is very little evidence of progression up the skills chain to level 4 through either standard or business routes, and of the training that takes place, little is at level 4+ standard."

Item 9. NW Statement of Learning and Skills Priorities – and Lancashire Priorities

- 9.1 Neil Shaw from EKOS Consulting gave a presentation on the regional skills priorities statement for 2007/08 – 09/10. EKOS are at the start of the consultation process which will take an anticipated 3-4 weeks.
- 9.2 Neil Shaw requested that the Lancashire office come back to EKOS with a list of contacts. Alison Wolstenholme said that she already has a date scheduled to meet with EKOS.

Item 10. Any Other Business

10.1 Karen O'Donoghue informed the Council that the NEET group was on the rise for the first time in a number of years. It appears to be the case that the number of people going into jobs without training are being displaced by migrant workers.

Item 11. Date of next meeting

11.1 The next meeting of the Council will take place on 17 October 2006 at the Lancashire office

Meeting chair	Mike Collier
Minute taker	Bev Watson
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