

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Minutes of meeting

Date 18 October 2005
Subject Council Meeting
Location LSC Lancashire
Time 17:00

Present Mike Collier, Chair
Nancy Cookson
Jeff Cowburn
Tony Gill
Alyson Malach
Clive Memmott
Ekwaëju Ohwoisi
Karen O'Donoghue
Steve Palmer
Khalid Saifullah

LSC staff Dave Cresswell
Andy Fawcett
Viv King

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Nigel Burke
Hazel Harding
Steve Johnson
Ray McManus
Malcolm McVicar
Iqbal Memon
John Moverley
Peter Neill
Janice Parker
Greg Turner
Sandra Whyte

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

Mike Collier welcomed all present. Ekwaëju Ohwoisi attended on behalf of Nigel Burke.

Mike Collier opened the meeting with some suggestions regarding a possible new shape for Board meetings. He felt that the Awayday forum was a good use of time and the breakout sessions had been a success.

It was agreed that the monthly meetings would remain with a standing agenda item covering the developments regarding Agenda for Change including Theme 7. It was also agreed that the Board would review the business cycle and provider network three times within the year.

Steve Palmer tabled a paper prepared regarding the conduct of Board meetings and asked the Board for its approval of the recommendations put forward. Steve Palmer and Mike Collier will agree an appropriate schedule of meetings fitting alongside the new planning and performance cycle and bring to a future meeting.

Action: SP/MC

Item 2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September were agreed as a true record with the removal of action point 3.3.

Item 3. Matters arising from July's meeting

Items 5.3 and 7.2 were covered in the Executive Director's Report.

Matters arising from September's meeting

Item 2.3 Andy Fawcett will bring a refined version of Lancashire's Draft Capital Plan to the November meeting for further debate. Carried forward.

Item 4. Performance Review Self Assessment Report

Andy Fawcett gave an introduction to his paper highlighting the dilemmas and issues. The Board were asked to comment on performance and make recommendations in respect of the format and content of the report.

It was noted that there had been significant improvements in the reporting arrangements due to local offices being furnished with performance information from both national and regional offices which assisted local offices when measuring progress and gave them something to benchmark against. The Lancashire offices performance was usually well above the regional benchmark.

Steve Palmer fed back on the main points arising from the group that discussed 14-19 issues.

- DfES appear to have moved from wanting to maximise participation to maximising achievement for 16-18s.
- The amount of unfunded learning going on in colleges is increasing.
- Colleges are coming under pressure to reduce 19+ even more than planned to meet the needs of 16-18s. This, in the longer term, will be seen to be as short-sighted because a seriously denuded 19+ offer could find it difficult to bounce back once demography starts to shrink 16-18 numbers.
- There appears to be a DfES assumption that 16-18 growth can be accommodated. Has anyone checked what colleges and providers maximum capacity is?

- WBL Providers may not grow Average in Learning any more if extra learners are only to be paid for at half the usual rate. Providers could get to a success rate of 60% but there is not the money in the system to fund this level of quality. Some WBL providers do not plough profit back into quality improvement.
- Connexions are seeing the number of live vacancies fall a little but there are now more in the NEET group because they have got closer to these young people and understand them better.
- The reputation and character of colleges and providers will change as more challenging young people are able to access learning.

Andy Fawcett fed back on the main points arising from the group that discussed Adult Skills Performance issues.

Skills for Life

- There was recognition that too few adults were having their skills for life improved.
- This was still a young person's agenda therefore we need to look at how, through, Employer Training Pilot we can move people into colleges' mainstream provision.
- Using adult community provision as a progression route
- We probably understated the needs of ethnic minority communities and there is a need to review our ESOL provision.

Demography and budgets

- The number of 16 to 18 year olds will be fewer and for Lancashire this means equipping adults.
- How we use the adult budget will be critical.

Level 2 and Level 3

- With ETP there is a need to recognise that the number of products we have in the market place is confusing employers and therefore we need to be open and honest about that and address it.
- We should avoid creating differently priced products.
- In terms of provision the learner/employer must be at the heart of the process and this inevitably leads to great challenge and more contestability.
- We need to ensure that ESF activity is complementary and does not lead to confusion.

Overseas workers

- The LSC needs to put itself in the position of the employer to determine what is right in terms of funding and not to approach this from a supplier perspective.

Local Intervention and Development Fund

- In the future we need to be much more targeted on fewer strategic priorities.

Mike Collier asked Board members how productive discussions had been having broken up into two groups. He felt that there was better engagement in smaller groups but the level of outcome depended on the topic of discussion. It was felt that the opportunity to break up into smaller groups enabled more Board members to contribute. However, it is important that the executive find topics that are big enough or difficult enough to warrant discussion by the Board without being subjects that cannot be changed or influenced.

It was agreed that the Board would aim to tackle specific dilemmas that influenced our overall strategy. A list of discussion topics/issues would be proposed by the executive for future meetings highlighting which meetings would break out into discussion groups and which would remain for the full Board to review performance.

Action: SP

Item 5. Executive Director's Report

Steve Palmer talked through his paper giving the Board opportunity to ask questions on the issues raised.

Steve Palmer informed the Board that EXP05, Lancashire's biggest interactive skills festival, had opened today with 100 exhibitors showing how employers may get involved in future skills festivals and how they can influence the information, advice and guidance that is available to young people to help them make informed decisions about their career paths. It is estimated that 8,000 young people will visit the exhibition.

It was noted that Dave Cresswell attended a Fringe event held by the Liberal Democrats and Steve Palmer had spoken at two Fringe events at the Conservative party conference on behalf of national office.

Item 6. Any other business

Steve Palmer updated the Board with regard to the recruitment of new members. Jeff Cowburn will remain on the Board until January or February, Malcolm McVicar's last Board meeting will be November, we await a nominee from the Lancashire Association of Secondary Heads to replace Margaret Dudley who has taken up a new post out of the area, we await to hear who will replace John Moverley from the North West Development Agency and Joan Lee replaces Steve Johnson who has moved districts. Joan will join the Board in November.

Item 7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board will take place at 5pm on 15 November at British Aerospace, Warton. Directions will follow with the meeting papers.