

Minutes



Learning+Skills Council

40th BOARD MEETING

Date: 20 July 2004
Time: 17.00 hours
Venue: Taylor House, Caxton Road, Fulwood, Preston
Chair: John Oliver

In attendance:

Board Members

Nancy Cookson
Jeff Cowburn
Linda Crabtree
Tony Gill
Ray McManus
Steve Palmer, Executive Director
Janice Parker

Apologies:

Board Members

Neville Chamberlain
Margaret Dudley
Hazel Harding
Alyson Malach
Malcolm McVicar
Greg Turner

Observers:

Steve Johnson
Karen O'Donoghue

Observers:

Phil Burgess
Nigel Burke

Directors:

Dave Cresswell
Andy Fawcett
Sandra Whyte

Viv King

ACTION

1. **Chairman's opening remarks**
 - 1.1 The Chairman welcomed all present and informed the Board that Ray Begley would join the meeting at Item7.
2. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Phil Burgess, Nigel Burke, Neville Chamberlain, Margaret Dudley, Hazel Harding, Viv King, Alyson Malach, Malcolm McVicar and Greg Turner.
3. **Minutes from previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2004 were agreed as a true record.
4. **Matters not arising elsewhere on the agenda**

No matters arising.

5. Nelson and Colne College Capital Bid

At the May Board meeting the Board requested further work to be done on the college affordability of the project. Sandra Whyte gave the Board an update on the current findings.

It was noted that the North West Regional Accountant had given his support to the bid.

Some concern was raised with regard to the level of funds to be borrowed against the amount of the project. This was due to delayed LSC funding and capital receipt in different financial years.

The college has no other borrowings and would return to financial health group B.

It was clarified that the college had forecast not receiving the projected level of grant from North West Development Agency which would result in taking the borrowing income ratio to its maximum (40%.)

Sandra Whyte updated on the issue regarding engineering explaining that local providers are in discussion but in the short term a solution had not been agreed.

Sandra Whyte stated that each bid was evaluated on its own merits, therefore, it was difficult to say if bids in the future would receive 45%.

After much debate the Board gave the bid its support.

6. Runshaw College Capital Bid

The Chairman and Linda Crabtree declared a conflict of interest. Tony Gill took over Chairmanship for this agenda item.

Discussion was held with regard the level of support that this capital bid was eligible for. It was felt that the College was being held back due to being in a good financial position. If the project were to be delayed retention rates would become a major issue.

It was agreed that this bid should be paused for the time being until Phil Dobson, Finance Manager had talked to Runshaw College in order to re-examine the financial forecasts and the effect of the project on the College's financial health. The fruits of this will be shared with a sub group comprising of Janice Parker and Nancy Cookson at the earliest opportunity to avoid further delay. **PD**

7. Working Together LSC and the Voluntary Sector

A lively and constructive discussion followed a briefing from Ray Begley which suggested that Lancashire may be host to 9,000 voluntary and community sector organisations. The scale of the sector may require targeted engagement. Possibilities included:

- working with 20-30 organisations
- developing a Consortium which could act as a Managing Agency

for the sector in engagement with the LSC and provided access to all voluntary community sector organizations

- concentrating LSC engagement on working with the sector to reach LSC priority groups
- adopting a 'something-for-something' relationship with the sector
- fund voluntary and community sector activity which is directed to learners rather than indirect activity like research
- concentrating FE's relationship with the voluntary and community sector on activity involving key FE clients (16-18 year olds, upskilling employees)
- Training Providers could explore franchise arrangements with the voluntary and community sector, as for FE

Continuity of funding to the voluntary and community sector was recognised as an important issue.

Robust baseline information and data on the voluntary community sector in Lancashire will be needed to inform local LSC implementation planning in line with the national 'Working Together' strategy.

Sandra Whyte commented that National Office had instructed institutions to restrict the use of franchise agreements due to growth. National Office are looking at which voluntary and community sector organisations we are already working with.

8. Executive Director's Report

Steve Palmer talked through his paper making the following points: -

Viv King and Andy Fawcett will assist Steve Palmer in the preparation for the 14-19 Area Inspection.

Tony Gill recommended that the Youth Sub Group membership be revised and meet before 13 August. Arranged for 2 August.

Steve Palmer reported that less than 25-30% of the marketing budget had been made available locally. The Marketing Plan is being developed and will be available from 17 August.

Steve Palmer confirmed the latest numbers of employers signed up for the engagement campaign across the north west are as follows:

Cheshire & Warrington	2
Cumbria	4
Lancashire	35
Manchester	11
Merseyside	5

The figures above show that Apprenticeship Solutions are working well.

Steve Palmer reported that Greater Merseyside LSC will be the lead for the NW pilot for offenders learning and skills provision which is being transferred from the DfES starting this year.

9. Any Other Business

None.

10. Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 21 September 2004, 5.00 pm at Taylor House.