

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL GREATER MANCHESTER

Minutes of the fifteenth meeting of the LSC Greater Manchester Council held on Tuesday, 6 May 2003, at Arndale House, Arndale Centre, at 16.00 hrs.

Present:

Members	Anthony Goldstone	Chair
	Rachael Charlton	
	Liz Davis	Executive Director (ED)
	Abdul Jabbar	
	Richard Hurst	
	Alan Manning	
	Kath Rigby	
	David Seddon	
	Ray Short	
	Michele Sutton	
	Mollie Temple	
	Chris Woodcock	

Observers	Nigel Burke - GO North West
	Hannah Roberts – Connexions Service
	Fiona Mellett – Chamber Business Enterprises
	Linda Tomlinson – Job Centre Plus

In attendance:	Jane Bracewell, Director of Quality Improvement (DQI)
	Andrew Harrison, Director of Finance and Systems (DFS)
	Ian Lever, Director of Strategy and Planning (DSP)
	Debra Woodruff, Director of Operations (DO)

Clerk to the Council Jean Johnson

Apologies	Pauline Green
	Richard Guy
	John Merry
	David Page

The chair welcomed all members to the meeting and drew their attention to the resignation of John Harwood, LSC Chief Executive.

169. Minutes of 4 March 2003 meeting

The minutes of the 4 March 2003 meeting were **accepted** as an accurate record and signed.

170. Paper 25/2003 - Matters arising

170.1 M.157.2 - page 2 – Wigan and Leigh College – ED reported that considerable progress had been made with the college with respect to its performance and its capacity to be involved in projects within the Borough. Although the capital

project supported by the council had been put on hold, a way forward was being developed with national LSC colleagues. A meeting was being held with the local partnership in Leigh on 9 May.

170.2 M.163.3 – page 5 – SkillCity - Chair informed Council that just over half of the shortfall for SkillCity was being borne by the Prince's Trust. He drew attention to the summary of the Evaluation Report attached to paper 25/2003. A meeting was being held on 14 May to discuss holding a skills event or events in 2004. After discussion, Council **agreed** that the evaluation report might be shared outside the meeting.

170.3 M.155.3 - page 7 – Launch of the Equality and Diversity Strategy – Chair of the Equality and Diversity External Advisory Group reported that the launch had taken place at the Renaissance Hotel and over 100 people had attended. Lord Ousely, former chair of the CRE, had given a very good speech and the event had been tremendously successful. Publicity, however, had been disappointing. Director, Strategy and Planning confirmed that the marketing team was working on publicizing good news stories such as those presented in the case studies. Chair stressed the importance of LSC publicizing what it was doing and said the image of the LSC was one of the items to be discussed at the national chairs' meeting the following week. Chair: EDEAG wished to record his thanks to staff who had worked so hard to make the event a success.

171. Paper 26/2003 - Year End Report 2002-03

171.1 ED introduced the report on LSC Greater Manchester's progress against the main targets in the corporate plan. It was based on the summary report produced for John Harwood's visit in April. She highlighted in particular the increase in participation for 16-18 year olds in FE (6.6%) and in school sixth forms (3.3%). However, the decline in the number of people participating in work-based learning (about 6%) meant that the overall increase was around 3.9%, equating to a net growth of 2.5% when the increase in the cohort of 1.4% was taken into account. This was at the top end of achievement in LLSCs overall.

171.2 The rest of the report covered the skills strategy, progress on provider quality including provider review and reports from inspections, and improving the provider base. Overall LSC Greater Manchester's progress was reasonable in comparison with the national picture. Council would be updated on progress against targets as the improved data became available. She invited questions and comments.

171.3 In discussion the following points were raised:

- The Child Care and Early Years Development joint CoVE with Hopwood Hall and Bury college had been omitted from the list in para 16
- It was very important that the LSC should be seen to deliver the government's targets and it needed to put across a powerful message about what it was achieving
- It was important for the LSC to take on the role of influencing education and training policy at a national level, rather than being driven by the DfES.

Council **received** the report.

172. Paper 27/2003 - Allocation Strategy – Local Intervention and Development (LID) Fund and TEC Legacy Fund 2003/04

172.1 Chair invited Director Strategy and Planning to introduce the paper. DSP said that Council had received an earlier paper on priorities for Local Initiatives Fund (LIF). The current paper arose out of the decision to combine LIF and Standards Fund moneys into a LID fund and the priorities set out in the earlier paper had been incorporated into it. The total combined LID + TEC Legacy fund available amounted to £12.7 m, of which £6.1 m was already committed as set out in para 21. Therefore £6.6 m was available for additional LID activities. An element of this would be 'ring-fenced' for the voluntary and community sector. In order to ensure that LSC Greater Manchester's priorities were being addressed, it had been decided that activity would be commissioned from organizations rather than holding open bidding rounds.

172.3 DSP invited questions and comments. In discussion the following points were raised:

- Council members still had the opportunity to propose additional priorities.
- A Council member suggested the fast track training of asylum seekers in Greater Manchester needed to be addressed. ED said this group was already a priority in main stream funding for, for example, basic skills. However, if there were a gap, it could be addressed.
- It was important that the commissioning process was seen to be open and transparent. DSP confirmed that the LID Allocation Strategy would be sent out for consultation to partner organizations.
- Council required more details of what was being commissioned.

172.3 Council **approved** the allocation strategy for LID and TEC Legacy Funds and asked for more detailed information on what was being commissioned.

ACTION: DSP to produce a more detailed paper for July

173. Paper 26/2003 - Making a Difference – The Image of LSC Greater Manchester

173.1 ED introduced the circulated paper which had been produced in response to a request from Council to define LSC Greater Manchester's positioning and relationship with its key partners and stakeholders. One of the key issues had been the lack of clarity about the LSC 'brand' and what we were promoting. The paper analysed the issues around positioning the LSC with its key partners and stakeholders and suggested an approach with each one. ED took Council through the paper. She welcomed discussion on whether the approach should be adopted or refined further.

173.2 In discussion the following points were made:

- Council members welcomed the paper which outlined the key messages for each sector. They suggested that the LSC should undertake an evaluation process to check whether the message being sent was the message being received.
- Although the LSC did not have direct contact with individuals and employers, it still needed to communicate with them to discover, for example, whether the right sort of training was being provided and whether providers were doing what the

LSC was expecting and paying them to do. ED confirmed that a satisfaction survey undertaken nationally had indicated that learner satisfaction was high.

- Parental support was a major factor in the success of young people. The Connexions service provided on-going support to young people if it were not being provided by parents. It managed the transition from school to work.
- The LSC's key purpose was to promote learning and fund providers to deliver that learning. The people it most needed to communicate with were colleges and training providers. They needed to be clear about the things the LSC would pay them to deliver.
- As far as employers were concerned, the LSC needed to get across the message that it understood their training needs and that it was paying for that training.
- It was not so important for individuals to get a grip of what the LSC did.
- The LSC needed to find out what sort of image it had at the moment.
- The relationship with colleges as the major providers of post-16 education and training was vital. 'Trust in FE' outlined the relationship between the LSC and FE colleges. However, trust came through experience and building up relationships between college staff and LSC officers.
- The LSC needed to be judged on what it empowered others to do.
- It was important to make sure that the providers were delivering what the government wanted the LSC to deliver and to make sure that people were aware of the education and training opportunities which were available.

Chair said the views expressed by Council would be taken into account.

173.3 Council **approved** the approach set out in the paper and **agreed** that the ED bring a further report to Council when appropriate.

ACTION: ED

174. Paper 30/2003 – Review of the Work of the Corporate Services Directorate

174.1 Director, Finance and Systems introduced the circulated paper summarizing the work of the Corporate Services Directorate, for which he had assumed responsibility following Jeff Morgan's secondment to the RDA. HR and facilities were two of the areas under review as part of the re-shaping exercise. As far as HR was concerned, local managers were being given training in national policies and being given the opportunity to take control of recruitment and selection. The facilities team was responsible for the building and for reception.

174.2 In discussion the following points were raised:

- The briefing session on the work of the Finance and Systems and Strategy and Planning Directorates had been very useful.
- Council noted that a further briefing was planned on the Quality and Operations Directorate for the morning of 27 June.
- Council members requested briefing sessions on key issues affecting the LSC, possibly for short sessions prior to Council meetings.

174.3 Council **noted** the work of the Corporate Services Directorate.

ACTION: ED/Clerk on further briefing sessions.

175. Paper 31/2003 - Chair's Report to Council

175.1 Chair introduced his report. He drew attention to para 2 and expressed his willingness to meet with other college corporations. ED confirmed that this had been conveyed to the Greater Manchester Principals Forum. Council discussed the relationship between the LSC Greater Manchester and governors. In discussion the following points were raised:

- Whether it might be possible to have formal meetings between the council and college governors to discuss critical issues such as planning and strategic area reviews.
- Meetings between the council and governors could be built into provider development plans. The LSC needed to be involved in governor development (eg leadership and management training). Because of the large number of colleges in the Greater Manchester area, it would be difficult for the ED and chair to meet them individually, but it could perhaps be done on an area basis once or twice a year. Such meetings should be scheduled round December after publication of the government's grant letter.
- If such meetings were to be held with college governors, similar meetings would need to be arranged with work-based learning providers.
- The Association of Colleges had a number of networks up and running, focusing on governors. ED confirmed that LSC had good contact with the local AoC representative, Tony Watmough, who attended the GM providers group meetings and was invited periodically to NW EDs' meetings. It was important for the LSC to be aware of the messages going to governors from the AoC.
- College governors had a statutory responsibility to develop and maintain the educational character of their colleges. It was important that the LSC's role in planning and purchasing programmes did not cut across the governors' ability to carry out that statutory responsibility.
- Training providers also had boards with statutory responsibilities.

175.2 Chair reported he had met with DfES colleagues carrying out the Financial and Management Systems review and had suggested that LLSC Chairs should be encouraged to be on the governing bodies of colleges outside their own areas. DFS said that LSC Greater Manchester had been chosen as one of the two LLSCs taking part in the review. Early feedback was that the DfES team had been pleased with the response they had received at LSC Greater Manchester and had found people pro-active and responsive.

175.3 Re annexes 3 and 4, ED said that Council members would be invited to attend events being held in their area. There should be no conflicts of interest as the role was not a developmental one. If, however, anyone felt there were problems with a particular invitation, they should consult her. Chair stressed the importance of Council members looking at capital projects planned for their areas. Council members welcomed the 'fact finding' role.

175.4 Chair drew attention to para 10 on the national Modern Apprenticeship Taskforce. He had invited members of the taskforce to attend LSC Greater Manchester's Modern Apprenticeship Awards event on 19 June. Director of Operations explained that the event would recognise the achievements of modern apprentices and

their employers and was intended to put work-based learning back on the map. Lucy Meacock and Tony Wilson would be taking part in the event.

Council **received** the report.

176. Paper 32/2003 - Executive Director's Report

176.1 Executive Director introduced her report, drawing attention to the National Skills Strategy and the National Employer Skills Survey. Chair drew attention to the Work Based Learning Leavers Survey at Annex B. There were no questions or comments.

Council **received** the report.

177. Paper 33/2003 - Finance Director's Report

177.1 Finance Director said that, although the final figures for 2002-03 were not yet available, we had kept within the administration budget and there was a likely underspend of £39,912.

177.2 As far as the budget for 2003/04 was concerned, LSC Greater Manchester had received a 'stand still' budget. Confirmation was awaited on whether the training and development budget had been 'ring-fenced'.

177.3 In discussion the following points were raised:

- DFS explained that there had been no redundancies in year as LSC Greater Manchester had managed its vacancies. Additional ESF and ETP work was being managed within existing resources. Income was being received from new funding streams.
- A voluntary severance scheme was being offered as part of the re-shaping exercise. This would be in three phases. Phase one would start on 8 May and would target where early savings could be made.
- ED pointed out that, with the transfers from other organizations, there had been some mismatches of skills and experience and no opportunity to bring in fresh blood. The reshaping exercise would give the LSC the opportunity to decide where it needed to build capacity. It was important that a new Chief Executive should be appointed quickly as s/he would want to influence the re-shaping exercise.
- ED said that the excess travel costs of £95K were the result of TUPE commitments for staff from former TECs. They would stay in place until 2004. Car parking costs of £93.8 K would remain.
- The £39.9K underspend would make a contribution to the national LSC budget.

Council **received** the report.

178. Reports from Advisory Committees

178.1 Paper 34/2003 - Adult Learning Committee – In the absence of ALC chair, Director of Operations introduced the minutes of the 24 February 2003 meeting and invited questions from Council Members.

178.1.1 DO confirmed that activity in Ufl hubs which received £11m of funding, made little contribution to the LSC's aims and objectives, as the funding was not targeted at qualifications. ED confirmed that the issue was being addressed at national level. DO confirmed that the Adult Learning Committee would consider the matter at a future meeting and the discussion would come to Council through its minutes.

Council **received** the minutes.

178.2 Paper 35/2003 - Equal Opportunities External Advisory Group – Ch:E+DAG had reported on the meeting at the March meeting of Council, He invited questions and comments.

178.2.1 In answer to a question on whether information on the Tameside College Achievement Rates Project would be available to other providers, Ch:E+DAG said that the project was at an early stage, but the results would be publicized once they were available. ED said success stories were being published on the LSC Greater Manchester web site. It would also be possible to have Equality and Diversity as a theme in the *Bulletin*

Council **received** the minutes.

ACTION: Director of Strategy and Planning

178.3 Paper 36/2003 – Young People's Learning Committee – In the absence of Chair, Director of Operations introduced the minutes of the 13 March meeting. There were no questions or comments.

Council **received** the minutes.

178.4 Paper 37/2003 Capital Committee – Chair introduced the recommendations of the 19 March meeting on capital projects relating to Bury and Holy Cross Colleges. Council **endorsed** the recommendations. Chair stressed the importance of the recommendations of Capital Committee and encouraged members of the committee to join him on visits to colleges proposing capital projects and to attend committee meetings.

Council **received** the minutes.

178.5 Paper 38/2003 - Audit Committee – In the absence of the Chair, Director, Finance and Systems introduced the minutes of the 8 April meeting. There were no questions or comments.

Council **received** the minutes.

179. Any other business

179.1 Chair reported that Peter Holmes had been appointed as Head of the Chair's Division at National Office and had asked if he could attend the 1 July meeting of Council.

ACTION: Clerk to invite and note for agenda

179.2 Abdul Jabbar indicated his wish to resign from the Adult Learning Committee because of other commitments.

ACTION: Director of Operations

179.3 In response to a question on how matters considered by its committees came before Council, Chair said that Council received information on what was discussed at the committees via the minutes. Members of Council sat on all the committees. It was up to the appropriate chairs to bring forward to Council any items they thought required discussion by Council and up to members of Council to read the minutes and ask questions. ED pointed out that Council also received reports on different areas of the LSC's work, eg adult learning, services to young people, basic skills etc.

179.4 ED confirmed that Kath Rigby would be invited to serve on Young People's Learning Committee and Michele Sutton on Adult Learning Committee.

ACTION: Director of Operations to inform them of dates of meetings

Council **agreed** to review the composition and terms of reference of its committees at the next meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to the Council

180. Dates of next meetings

180.1 Council **agreed** that the special meeting planned for 10 June should be postponed until October.

180.2 Chair reminded members of the North West Council Members' Away Day on Friday, 13 June at the Low Wood Hotel, Windermere. The event would begin with lunch at 12.00 hrs.

180.3 Chair confirmed that the next meeting of Council would be on **Tuesday, 1 July 2003** at 16.00 hrs.

Chair thanked members for attending the meeting and declared the meeting closed.