

**(COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)( FINAL VERSION - SENT TO COUNCIL MEMBERS 11/6/01)Inc 27/28 June Papers**

**MINUTE NUMBER 01/80 TO 01/91**

**MINUTES OF THE GREATER MERSEYSIDE  
LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2001 AT  
LIVERPOOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**PRESENT:** Jim Michie (Chair), Paul Holme, David Atkin, Kath Boullen,  
Gordon Burns, Martin Carey, Sue Carmichael, Brian Davies, Claire Dove,  
John Firr, Heather Hardcastle, Geoffrey Piper, George Sweeney

**(OBSERVERS):** Peter Fletcher (Greater Merseyside Enterprise Ltd)  
Kieran Gordon (Connexions Partnership)  
Mike Hill (Government Office for the North West)  
Brian Kearsley (Employment Service North West)

**APOLOGIES:** Mike Doyle, Veronica Laird, Richard Marbrow

**IN ATTENDANCE:** John Harwood (part), Clare Caffrey (Secretary), Nick Gerrard,  
Richard Merritt

**01/80 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed Mike Hill to the meeting.

Whilst giving apologies from Local Council Members the Chair explained that Richard Marbrow, in compliance with National Office guidance, was not present as he would be standing in the forthcoming General Election. Items discussed at the Young Peoples' Advisory Committee Meeting held on 15 May formed two of the Agenda items at this meeting and, therefore, no formal feedback from that meeting was needed.

**01/81 MINUTES AND SUMMARIES FOR ACCEPTANCE**

Subject to the apologies being shown clearly at future Advisory Committee Meetings and minor amendments under Any Other Business [01/78] Local Council Members **AGREED:**

- that the following minutes and Summaries should be signed by the Chair after the meeting
  - a) Minutes of the 25 April meeting
  - b) Summary of the 25 April meeting
  - c) Summary of the 28 March meeting

**01/82 MATTERS ARISING**

**[01/68 Chair's Opening Remarks]**

Members noted that the Register of Interests would be circulated to them after a few issues had been resolved.

#### **[01/74 Executive Director's Report]**

Matters arising from this Report would be picked up later in the Agenda

#### **[01/75 Audit Committee]**

The chair thanked Council Members who had volunteered as Committee Members and they noted that the Audit Committee would comprise of Mike Doyle, John Firr, Geoffrey Piper and Veronica Laird and an initial meeting was being arranged.

#### **[01/78 Any Other Business]**

Members noted that a review of the production of minutes and the process for reporting back to the Council was taking place and **AGREED**:

- Oral reports from the Chairs of the Advisory Committees should provide initial feedback to Council Members at the next Council Meeting after each Advisory Committee Meeting

(John Harwood, Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Council, joined the meeting at this point and the Chair welcomed him on behalf of Local Committee Members).

### **01/83 CORPORATE PLAN CONSULTATION AND LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Nick Gerrard reminded Members that the draft response to the National Corporate Plan would be sent to National office the next day. The Learning and Skills Council had asked a series of questions and in providing answers, Nick explained that contributions received from Council Members and Partners had been used to help shape the Local Council's response. Since the Council paper had been written an additional contribution had been received from the NWDA and Members considered the issues raised by them.

Members noted the most significant issues identified in the draft response relating to the need to set targets reflecting the range and challenges of the LSC's work in addition to establishing a local strategic framework reflecting the LSC's six strategic priorities. During discussion Members endorsed the view expressed in the paper that liP recognition as a measure of employer engagement was too narrow.

Section One - Members **agreed** the response

Section Two - Members **agreed** the response, suggesting that reference to Lifelong Learning should also be incorporated into the National Plan. Members also recognised the importance for the Local Council in ensuring progression for individuals into higher education

Section Three - Members **agreed** with the response and noted that not all targets set in the past had been capable of measurement but that ongoing work should enable broader areas to be identified and measured

Section Four - Members **agreed** the response, endorsing the preference for a local structure which reflected the six strategic priorities identified in the remit letter, to achieve clarity and coherence

Section Five - Members **agreed** the response.

Section Six - Members **agreed** the response and noted from John Harwood that a schedule should be available locally detailing approximately twelve organisations with which the LSC may have individual national Memoranda of Understanding in future, with the Ofsted agreement having been finalised

John Harwood informed Local Council Members that the response of the Local Council would be beneficial in contributing to the National Council's decision making.

John Harwood informed Members that whilst a small number of shared objectives existed across the country, the five targets were intended to provide flexibility for Local Councils. Members considered each section of the response to the draft Corporate Plan.

Members noted the planning cycle and timetable for the Local Strategic Plan and details of the key activities the Local Council would need to engage in as it was developed, including key dates for Council Members' agreement of the Local Strategic Plan at various stages prior to final agreement in March 2002 and prior to publication. Council Members endorsed the need for the Plan to be owned and understood by Council Members, staff and the LSC's strategic partners.

Nick informed Members that the Planning Cycle and Timetable linked with Partners' plans and noted the Council Members' wish to have ownership of the Plan and ample opportunity to contribute at the July and September Council Meetings. During discussion Council Members noted that, if necessary, the August Council Meeting (presently subject to cancellation because of the holiday season) could be held in order to discuss the Plan.

### **Consultation Approaches**

Members noted that the Local Council had met with a variety of partners to identify common agendas prior to the formal consultation stage, post September. Nick emphasised the different methods of consultation to be used and the need for the Local Council to be innovative and imaginative ensuring direct approaches were made to employers during consultation in addition to evaluating the effectiveness of the approaches used.

During discussion Members noted the intention for the Local Council to consult widely within sectors and with end users, using a variety of innovative mechanisms to achieve effective communication with different groups. They also noted the intention for the Local Council to work closely with the Connexions Partnership to engage young people and to progress work on addressing the challenge to engage adult non learners. Members made a number of suggestions for consideration as part of the consultation exercise:

- ensure inclusion of the voluntary and community sector (Members noted this was planned).
- to consult with the wider community by considering consultation with agencies able to raise awareness including registered social landlords, the Probation Service, Youth Teams, Age Concern etc and the private sector training market

- to consider using the North West database of growth sector businesses and key employers held by The Business Leadership Team

Following this discussion, Local Council Members **AGREED** that:

- the Local Council should be used as a gateway to the business community
- Members should be informed and aware at each stage of the Plan's development and prior to the Plan's roll out

### **Research Strategy Paper/Baseline Information**

Members agreed on the need to ensure that baseline information was accurate to enable any future assessment regarding the Local Council's impact.

Nick informed Members of the proposed role of the Greater Merseyside Skills Research Forum to comment upon the Local Council's strategy and ensure added value and coherence between the relevant organisations' research activities.

During discussion Members **agreed**:

- that the Local Council should aim to work more closely with Trade Unions in future where they may assist in providing research regarding skills gaps etc and that this point should be made explicitly
- that Local Council Members should submit any further contributions to Paul Holme and Nick Gerrard
- a copy of the submission going to National office should also be sent to Local Council Members
- to support the estimated resource of £190,000 for the Research Forum

### **01/84 NATIONAL OFFICE PERSPECTIVE**

John Harwood thanked Local Council Members for their participation in establishing the Local Council, emphasising the importance the National Council placed on the existence and effective operation of Local Councils in tackling underachievement and low participation in education and training in the Country. John emphasised the importance of local solutions to address local challenges and thanked Paul Holme and his staff for coping with the complex transition process over a short time period in addition to coping with two Area Inspections and providing assistance after the Cammell Laird announcement.

John informed Local Council Members of the need to unlock talent and ambition locally, devising local solutions and of the need for the LSC structure to recognise the balance between national drive and local flexibility. He requested that Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council's (GMLSC) Corporate Plan response identified any specific ways it was that GMLSC could assist the Learning and Skills Council in establishing its work.

John recognised that Local Council's had inherited working patterns and that new ways needed to be devised, including the way in which funding was allocated. He also encouraged Local Council Members and staff to break away from measuring processes and to look at the attainment of outcomes, using funding as a means to an end and increasing flexibility.

John emphasised the need for the Local Council to examine how adults could be motivated to achieve and how training participation rates for 16-18 year olds could be increased. He referred to the historic prejudice resulting in a divide between the celebration of academic and vocational achievements for individuals and the need to ensure that the Country's workforce was well educated and skilled to contribute towards a successful economy. John encouraged Local Council Members to recognise that all young people deserved high quality learning opportunities and highlighted the importance of providing the infrastructure to make it possible.

A major challenge facing the country was to change the culture of approach to participation in learning and John informed Local Council Members that it required effective organisation at local level as the impact of educational and skills attainment would be crucial to the country's economy.

During discussion, John confirmed that the strategic position of Local Education Authorities must be recognised nationally and Council Members noted that schools, whilst slower to recognise the impact of the changes were now quickly building the necessary relationships.

Local Council Members hoped that the National Council would reflect on the experiences of Local Councils in reacting to different circumstances and draw lessons from what may have been learnt, for the future.

The Chair thanked John for his contribution to the Meeting.

## **01/85 16 -19 AREA WIDE INSPECTIONS OF KNOWSLEY AND LIVERPOOL**

Members considered the development of the action plans currently being produced to respond to the Area Inspection Reports for Knowsley and Liverpool, noting that the response of the Local Council would influence its planning. (Copies of the slides used are available on request).

Nick examined the key themes arising from the Area Inspection Reports, emphasising the need to build upon the co-operative relationships in existence to achieve what was necessary to address the issues identified in both Reports. He highlighted the requirements to ensure successful post area inspection action planning, the legal position of the Local Council and the roles and responsibilities of the Local Council and partners.

Members noted the Local Council's intention to use Learning Partnerships to prepare the action plans. Members noted that all sectors listed had responsibilities relating to the implementation of the action plans.

Members were informed that the outline action plans would be submitted to National Office on 25 May but that further changes to the action plans would be necessary and **agreed** that:

- Members would submit any queries to Nick as soon as possible and should receive copies of the Action Plans submitted to Coventry on 25 May
- consistency of style in terms of the presentation of issues arising out of Area Inspections should be introduced

- the quality of training provision should improve as the criteria for re-contracting would be influenced by the outcomes of Area Inspections.
- The Local Council should ensure that its agenda linked with partners' agendas
- The Executive Team should examine how it would implement the Local Council's quality management strategy now and in the long term, reporting back at a future meeting
- the Executive Director should provide a list of items the Local Council sought to roll out across the Region in response to the Area Inspections to Members
- the Executive should approach Liverpool Education Authority to request that the review into 16-18 year old provision be taken forward more quickly than presently planned
- the final action plan should be discussed at the June Local Council Meeting

## **01/86 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Members noted Paul's report and he highlighted a number of issues:

### **Directors Posts**

Paul Holme informed Members that interviews for the Strategy and Europe and Service Delivery Directors posts would be held the following Wednesday. The interviews would be conducted by Jim Michie, Paul Holme and Julia Dowd, Executive Director, Cheshire and Warrington Learning and Skills Council. Members **agreed** that:

- a breakdown of applicants' details (relating to equal opportunities) should be provided at the next Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee Meeting

### **Local Initiative Fund (LIF)**

During the last Council Meeting Members had requested details of authorities relating to LIF provision and Members **agreed** that:

- items over £150k and items considered sensitive by the Executive should be brought to the Council for authorisation
- a summary of LIF approvals should be provided to the Local Council on a quarterly basis

### **June Workshop**

Members noted that the two day workshop scheduled on 27 and 28 June would take place at the Leasowe Castle Hotel, Wirral and **agreed** that:

- the 27 June would be dedicated as a training session for Local Council Members, using the knowledge and expertise of Local Members and would be facilitated by Sue Wood, Organisational Development Manager
- the Council Meeting would be held on 28 June and Council Members and Observers were invited

## **Cammell Laird**

Paul informed Members of the current situation regarding Modern Apprentices at the Cammell Laird company. Martin Carey declared an interest in this item based on his partner's association with the Laird Foundation. During discussion Brian Davies informed Members that assistance had been offered for Modern Apprentices from another business sector and Members **agreed** that:

- Jim Mulvaney should speak to Brian
- Members should receive copies of the press release sent out that day
- the LSC should track the progress of each Modern Apprentice

## **01/87 FEEDBACK: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Sue Carmichael, chair of the Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee gave a verbal update from the last meeting on 3 May and Members noted:

- in addition to Richard Merritt, two of his team members would attend future meetings where possible
- the meeting had received the first of a series of briefings scheduled to cover disability, gender, race and other aspects of diversity. The briefing received on disability had been delivered by Louise Barry of Merseyside Disability Federation. Louise had highlighted a higher than average proportion of disabled people on Merseyside (excluding Halton), some of the barriers to access to further education, some of the difficulties faced by disabled people regarding access to courses, completion of courses and recognition of courses; all further education providers would have to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Richard would provide a draft guide for providers for the next meeting setting out ten key factors on social inclusion issues
- a draft Equal Opportunities/Social Inclusion Strategy would be provided for the Council's consideration for embedding within the wider organisation Plan and completion by March 2002
- an internal Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Advisory Group, including staff from each part of the Local Council, had been established
- Equal Opportunities and social inclusion would be integral to all training and would form part of the Workshop for Local Council Members on 27/28 June

Paul also reported that:

- Elaine Simpson and Graham Talbot, Directors of Education at Sefton and Halton, had accepted invitations to be co-opted attendees of the Young Peoples' and Adult Advisory Committees

## **01/88 STANDING REPORTS**

### **Connexions Partnership**

Kieran Gordon informed Local Council Members that the Company's Business Plan had been submitted and feedback was awaited. The Company's Memorandum and Articles were prepared and it would be registered shortly as a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Advertisements for senior managers had been placed and appointments were expected to be made by the end of July and staff from four Career Service companies would be TUPE'd into the Connexions Partnership.

### **Greater Merseyside Enterprise Ltd (GME Ltd)**

Peter Fletcher informed Members that Business Transfer Agreements were currently being considered by the Company's Solicitors. GME Ltd had an additional 27 staff due to start work shortly and having filled the last senior management team position were concentrating on the harmonisation of staff contracts and the implementation of changes to the IT and communications systems.

## **01/89 MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

Members approved minutes of:

- a) Adult Learning Advisory Committee Meeting held on 17 April
- b) Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee Meeting held on 20 March 2001

## **01/90 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair reminded Members that the two day Workshop in June would include a training and development session for Members on 27 June from 4pm. Members were encouraged to stay overnight at the hotel prior to an 8.30am start on 28 June for the Council Meeting. Members **agreed** that:

- the Secretary to the Council should arrange a working breakfast or lunch at the hotel for the Chair and Observers on 28 June

## **01/91 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

A two day Workshop was scheduled to take place on 27/28 June at the Leasowe Castle Hotel in Wallasey.

**Separate Minute from Discussion of the Draft Corporate Plan at GMLSC Meeting on 25 May 2001 (Paul - Jim asked for this to be minuted separately)**

**Section 3 (Pages 4 -5)**

- Discussion included reference to Fran Hulbert's response and her comment regarding an absence of level 4 NVQs
- Brian Davies said he had a difficulty re level 4 and that we have technical people that would qualify for level 4 but that major obstacles existed (do you need management experience to qualify??)
- You reminded Council members that NVQs are owned by employers and that this must be achieved through employers, also that it was obvious through the national figures that many employers do not see the advantages of encouraging their staff to take formal qualifications
- You said we needed to look at the above barriers to qualifications
- **Jim asked Paul and team to find ways to take this forward**