

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

MINUTE NUMBER 04/388 TO 04/398

**MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL GREATER MERSEYSIDE
MEETING
TUESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2004
AT TITHEBARN HOUSE**

- PRESENT:** Roger Hoyle (Chair), Paul Holme (Executive Director),
Claire Dove MBE (Deputy Chair), Heather Akehurst, Kath Boullen, Dr
Martin Carey, Cllr Richard Marbrow, John Firr, Gordon Burns, Cllr
John Swain, Dr Maureen Williams
- APOLOGIES:** David Atkin, Sue Carmichael, Phil Round, Elaine Owen, Sir George
Sweeney
- OBSERVERS:** Kieran Gordon (GM Connexions), George Maguire (Jobcentre Plus)
- APOLOGIES:** Peter Morton (BLNW), Nigel Burke (GONW)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Elaine Bowker, Dave Brennan, Sue Wood, Bob Cooney / Marie
Brookfield (Secretariat)

04/388 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

Roger Hoyle welcomed Members to the first meeting after the summer break and highlighted the importance of this meeting in setting the agenda for the remainder of the year and beyond. Roger also stressed the importance of the forthcoming December Workshop, both in the operational planning process and in the opportunity to present Greater Merseyside issues to a range of external participants, including representatives of the construction industry, the North West Regional Director and the Chair of the LSC. Council Members were asked to make every effort to attend this event.

Roger advised Members of his reappointment as Chair until March 2007 and congratulations were extended in response. It was also noted that Roger was now a member of the LSC National Appointments Committee, assisting in the appointments process across the organisation.

Congratulations were also extended to Sir George Sweeney who missed the meeting in attending an award ceremony to celebrate the achievement of Beacon College status for Knowsley Community College.

Changes to the personnel and structure of the Secretariat Team at LSC Greater Merseyside were noted and Members welcomed Marie Brookfield as the incoming Secretariat Manager. Members also thanked Bob Cooney for his support and wished him good luck in his new role.

Roger provided feedback to Members on recent events he had attended:

Seminar with Council Members, 10 September

Members noted the valuable session held for Workforce Development Advisory Committee members allowing extended discussion of topics outside of the usual meeting rounds. Those

involved had enjoyed the experience and sessions for other Advisory Committees will be held in the near future.

North West Development Agency Annual Conference, 24 September

Roger reported on the success of the conference and Members noted the function it serves in allowing stakeholders at all levels to question the Development Agency in open forum.

Liverpool First Board / Liverpool Partnership Group Away Day, 5-6 October

Members noted the opportunity presented by this event in bringing together key agencies to share and explore issues of common interest.

04/389 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 20 JULY 2004

The Minutes were AGREED for signature by the Chair as a true and accurate record subject to amendment for grammatical error.

04/390 SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF 20 JULY 2004

The Summary was AGREED for signature as a true and accurate record subject to amendment for grammatical error.

04/391 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

04/392 OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND CHANGES

Members noted the presentation given by Paul Holme on current and forthcoming issues for the LSC Greater Merseyside agenda. The presentation was designed to assist Members to:

- understand and contextualise the current national, regional and local priorities
- lay the foundation for further discussion at the December Workshop
- set the context for 2005/06 Business Planning

Kieran Gordon and Councillor Richard Marbrow left the meeting at this point.

The presentation focused upon:

- Young People
- Workforce Skills
- 'Worklessness'
- Political and Institutional complexity
- Local issues

In discussion Members explored various related topics including:

- the likely end of Objective 1 status for Merseyside
- social inclusion issues and the importance of joint working with partner agencies
- the need to address all demographics in relation to policy development
- the stress on finite resources from such a comprehensive agenda

In particular Members discussed the effects of such a dynamic environment on Council effectiveness and the need for regular review to ensure added value.

It was AGREED that this issue will be explored further at the December Workshop. In addition it was AGREED Paul Holme would provide Members with a snapshot of the current situation in relation to the number of regional and sub-regional agencies involved in the LSC agenda based upon their remit, budget and organisation of arrangements.

04/393 BUDGETS AND PERFORMANCE

Elaine Bowker presented the paper for discussion updating Members on progress against budgets, performance to date and key targets. Members noted the introduction of an LSC Performance Scorecard that was expected to provide a unified way of managing and reporting on performance across all local Councils.

Overall good performance was noted especially in relation to Co-financing via the Skillworks programme. Good progress toward Basic Skills targets was also noted despite the impact on outcomes of an increase in provision of first-step provision.

Councillor John Swain left the meeting at this point.

Areas of challenge were recognised as the success rates for Further Education and the challenging Apprenticeship PSA targets.

It was noted that delays in staff recruitment had resulted in a slight underspend on the Administrative budget.

Roger requested that members be kept informed of budget and performance issues on a regular basis and noted that the Performance, Quality and Audit Advisory Committee would be looking in further detail at issues of equal opportunities and diversity in performance results.

04/394 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Paul Holme presented key issues from his report for Members' attention.

Members noted the work undertaken with partners to reach a conclusion on future plans for the European Social Fund. Good progress with Strategic Area Review was also noted with consultation in Knowsley underway and plans well progressed in other boroughs.

A request was made for Members to agree to support a Capital Funding bid by Knowsley Community College in relation to the building of a new facility for learner provision. It was noted that the level of funding support was not within the control of the local Council, being decided by national and regional finance teams, and that Members should consider the bid from the perspective of learning need. Members felt that they did not receive adequate data in relation to this and other bids to make an informed judgement and AGREED that:

- this bid be re-appraised in light of any additional information, either at the next Council Meeting or by a delegated sub-group of Members depending upon timescales
- in future a standard stencil be used to present such bids rather than a subjective narrative report
- a report on expected Capital Bid requests for the next twelve months be brought to the next Council Meeting

Concern was also expressed at the need for consultation with local partners. Members felt that this should be an integral part of the approval process.

04/395 FEEDBACK FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Adult Learning Advisory Group

Martin Carey advised Members of a successful recent meeting on 30 September and thanked Sue Wood and her team for their input. The meeting had focused in particular on a review of the Adult Strategic Area Review process and Co-financing, for which Advisory Committee Members had agreed to set up a Review Group.

Performance Quality and Audit Advisory Committee

Heather Akehurst reported that the last meeting on 21 September had been particularly successful and well attended. Thanks were extended to David Brennan for assistance in producing a stimulating agenda. Main topics of discussion were noted as the Local Risk Assessment Plan and the decision to seek to co-opt a volunteer financial expert onto the Committee from an external organisation.

Workforce Development Advisory Committee

John Firr advised Members that the Committee had not met since the last Council Meeting.

Young People's Advisory Committee

Elaine Bowker informed Members that the last meeting, held on 6 September, had been an awareness session on Strategic Area Review to which all Council Members had been invited and the papers circulated.

04/396 FEEDBACK FROM OBSERVER ORGANISATIONS

GM Connexions

Members noted the update paper provided by Kieran Gordon.

Business Link Greater Merseyside

Members noted the update paper provided by Peter Morton.

04/397 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Recruitment

Members voiced their continuing concern at the omission of equal opportunities statements in LSC recruitment advertisements placed in the media. It was AGREED that Roger and Paul Holme would contact National Office to seek to address this issue.

04/398 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting would take place on 7/8 December from 4.00pm in the Thornton Hall Hotel, Wirral.