

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 18 September 2007
Subject Council Meeting
Location Radisson Hotel, Liverpool
Time 16:00
LSC office Greater Merseyside
Publication intent Internal

Present Roger Hoyle (Chair), Helen France, Kath Boullen, Martin Carey, Sue Carmichael, Claire Dove, John Firr,
In attendance Kieran Gordon (Connexions)
LSC staff Karon Brownbill, Tim Hall, Kevin Mothersdale, Simon Pierce, Nicola Scott,
Apologies Elaine Owen, Sir George Sweeney, Phil Round, John Swain, Brian Rourke, Marureen Williams

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 Roger Hoyle welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting of 2007. He then gave an overview of the agenda.
- 1.2 He gave feedback on meetings he had attended since the Council last met, highlighting the following:-
 - Attendance at the Greater Merseyside Chief Executives' and Leaders' Group to ensure skills were high on the agenda for the City Region.

2. Minutes of last meeting of 3 July 2007

2.1 These were agreed.

Merseyside Council Statement of Achievement

2.2 More data had been gathered, regional marketing team were finalising. The statement would come to the next Council meeting.

Action: Statement of Achievement to next meeting

3. Transition Arrangements

3.1 Roger tabled a National Council paper which identified 3 areas of potential delegation from National Council to the Regional Board, including the repatriation of some responsibilities from Local Councils.

- 3.2 The Act likely to become law late 2007/early 2008. Chris Banks and Regional Chairs were keen that decisions business should continue and the local expertise was harnessed. The paper outlined the continuing responsibilities of local Councils with the proposition that they should meet, as required until dissolved or new regional arrangements were in place.
- 3.3 Helen endorsed Roger's comments as its contribution was invaluable. There were substantial capital plans to consider, also, the Regional Employment Strategy, Strategic Investment Framework and other activities would benefit from the Council's views.
- 3.4 It was anticipated that Councils in the North West would continue .
- 3.5 Martin Carey raised the issue of Advisory Committees, particularly with regard to Train to Gain. They would continue to meet.
- 3.6 Shelagh would circulate dates in December 2007 and February 2008. Kath Boullen suggested the next meeting be held at St Helens Chamber.

Decision: Council would continue to meet regularly until regional arrangements were in place.

4. Business Cycle 2007-08

- 4.1 Simon Pierce gave a presentation on the Business Cycle.
- 4.2 He set out the key implications and challenges in commissioning, procuring and contracting and other elements of the business cycle.
- 4.3 He confirmed the Council's ambassadorial role, to understand the agenda and represent it in their spheres of influence.
- 4.4 Council would have opportunity to comment on the plan before it was finalised. The local plan would also require Council approval. Council requested more information on funding .
- 4.5 Kath Boullen asked that the procurement rounds be managed effectively
- 4.6 In response to a query from John Firr, Simon confirmed the intention to have the ESF programme in contract by February 2008 and the new programme for Priority 1 and Priority 2 in place, to produce an overlap of programmes. Contracts to be operational by August 2008.

Action: Information on the funding methodology to be sent to Council

5. Co-Financing Plan

- 5.1 The Merseyside annex to the Regional Co-financing plan was tabled, the full plan being available on the website. Karon gave a verbal update.
- 5.2 ESF would be integrated in the LSC Business Cycle for the first time.
- 5.3 Co-financing was essentially a Regional programme whilst recognising Merseyside issues..
- 5.4 This was a more focussed programme with 2 new priorities: Priority 1 (worklessness and NEET) and Priority 2 (skills and adaptable workforce).
- 5.5 The co-financing plan had been out to region-wide consultation - the Merseyside event was held on 23 July and was well attended.

5.6 In the future the ability to work in partnership will be central to ESF through the City Employment Strategy. There were bids for c.£36m in Priority 1 and c.£33m in Priority 2.

5.7 The PQQ procurement process was currently open. Sessions were being organised to support the voluntary sector. ITT's were anticipated in October, leading to some implementation between February and April 2008. Efforts would be made to keep continuity of existing programmes.

Action: Detailed update to be given at December meeting

6. Investors in People

6.1 Nicola gave an update on the Investors in People assessment currently taking place in the Region, the results were due on 19 September. There had been a positive initial assessment last year.

6.2 In the past year there had been significant staff engagement/development.

Action: Nicola would feed back on the results of the liP assessment

7. Train to Gain

7.1 Kevin circulated a paper to Council. The Adult Advisory Committee had reviewed progress. Key points were:-

- The North West was the best region nationally in terms of delivery, of which Greater Merseyside delivery c.70%.
- Manchester and Cheshire & Warrington had been pilot areas but the process was new to Greater Merseyside. During the first 10 periods in Merseyside average starts were around 310, in period 11, 850 starts and in period 12 over 1000. If the increases in performance continue, the Merseyside targets should be exceeded.
- Performance by Sector: Percentages delivered by local providers against regional percentage of deliver – construction and engineering were below, health and social care above the regional percentage.

7.2 In response to a query from Claire Dove, Helen confirmed Train to Gain advertising was more localised and sector specific. A roadshow was planned for the early October.

7.3 John Firr queried the effectiveness of the brokerage service. In April there were 90 employer engagements and in August, 750. Whilst reasons for the variance were not clear, further investigation was in hand.

7.4 Martin Carey confirmed the Advisory Committee's role.

8. Director of Area's Report

8.1 Helen introduced the Report. The LSC was committed to influencing the transition. It had been confirmed resource shifts would not occur before 2010/11. There should be a consultation document in the New Year.

8.2 There was a clear commitment from the national leadership to safeguard the interests of staff, to ensure there was undertake sound planning and objective setting to prepare for the future.

8.3 Martin Carey was concerned that, as the Council was keen to celebrate its achievements, the achievements of core staff who had been through difficult times should also be celebrated. Helen responded that this would be discussed at the next regional staff conference.

9. Observer Reports

Connexions

9.1 Kieran Gordon circulated a report summarising performance to July 2007.

9.2 More generally, changes at Connexions had reached a critical stage. From 1 April 2008, funding would go to local authorities in the form of a non-hypothecated grant. The transition beyond 2008 was being planned and agreement in principle had been reached at the city region level, that Connexions would be commissioned to provide services to each of the six areas. This still had to be ratified in each of the six areas.

9.3 The next task would be commissioning and it was hoped local authorities would commission at the Greater Merseyside level.

9.4 A sizeable workforce remodelling would be taking place over the next 6-9 months. No recruitment had taken place over the past several months but Connexions had improved on the previous year's performance.

Jobcentre Plus

9.5 A report was tabled.

10. Feedback from Advisory Committees

10.1 There was no feedback.

11. Date of next meeting

11.1 Beginning of December, date to be advised.

Meeting chair	Roger Hoyle
Minute taker	Shelagh Page
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