

**MINUTE NUMBER 05/446 TO 05/456**

**MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL  
GREATER MERSEYSIDE MEETING  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 19 JULY 2005  
AT TITHEBARN HOUSE**

**PRESENT:** Roger Hoyle (Chair), Elaine Bowker (Executive Director), Heather Akehurst, Kath Boullen, Gordon Burns, Dr Martin Carey, Sue Carmichael, Claire Dove, John Firr, Cllr Richard Marbrow, Phil Round (from item 05/451), Brian Rourke, Cllr John Swain, Dr Maureen Williams

**APOLOGIES:** Elaine Owen, Sir George Sweeney

**OBSERVERS:** Jane Wylde (representing Nigel Burke, GONW), Peter Morton (BLGM), Kieran Gordon (Connexions), Mike Scott (JC+)

**APOLOGIES:** Nigel Burke (GONW)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** David Brennan; Sue Wood, Kirsty Evans, Mike McDermott, Marie Brookfield (Secretariat Manager), Joyce Wildman (Secretariat Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** None

**05/446 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

Roger Hoyle welcomed Council members to the fourth meeting of the year.

He advised members of Nigel Burke's appointment to Director of Children and Learners and passed on the congratulations of Council.

Roger reminded members that this year's residential would be held on 6 and 7 of December in the Radisson Hotel in Liverpool – further details of which would be discussed at the next meeting.

He updated members on the progress of 1:1s with Council members and also reminded members that the themed lunch time sessions would commence on 21 July with a session on EDIMs/Adult followed by a further session on 29 July which would focus on Work Force Development (WfD).

He briefly outlined items to be discussed during the meeting.

Roger provided feedback to Council on his attendance at a variety of meetings since the last Council meeting:

- Chairs' event on 6/7 June – the 14-19 agenda, Agenda for Change and the work of the Regional Management Board had been discussed;
- College visits – he had visited Liverpool Community College, Hugh Baird College, King George V College and Wirral Metropolitan College where he had gained a good insight into how the LSC worked with Colleges;
- Maria Eagle MP – he had, along with Elaine Bowker, met with Maria Eagle where they had discussed, amongst other issues, developing opportunities for young people in Speke. Elaine Bowker had agreed to maintain contact with Ms Eagle;
- Launch of Kensington Life Bank – he had been extremely impressed by the efforts being made to aid development in such a run down area;
- Meeting with Kirsty Evans and her Management Team.

Roger referred to the North West Council Members' Conference which had been held on 10 June and commented that there had been some negative feedback from members. Members felt that, whilst there was a lot of 'jargon' at these events, it provided a good opportunity to meet counterparts and focus on more local issues.

#### **05/447 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2005**

The minutes were AGREED for signature by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

#### **05/448 SUMMARY OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2005**

The Summary was AGREED for signature by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

#### **05/449 MATTERS ARISING**

05/441, Executive Director's Report - Elaine Bowker advised members that the Principal of Widnes and Runcorn 6<sup>th</sup> Form College had now resigned. She informed the meeting that, by Governors of the College not appointing a permanent Principal to the vacant post, this would enable the LSC to work with them on their options for the future.

05/444, Any Other Business - David Brennan updated members on the situation regarding Halton College's Capital Business Case. He advised members that there had been issues relating to the financial package – which were discussed at a meeting earlier in the day between the College, NWDA, GONW and the LSC, the outcomes were not yet known. Elaine Bowker informed the meeting that the LSC was working closely with the College and when the financial package had been agreed it would be presented to Council for consideration and support. She commented that the LSC was also working with the College on other broader strategic issues which Council would also be kept informed of.

Maureen Williams requested that, as the NWDA representative on Council, she should be kept fully informed of any issues and/or developments.

Other issues relating to 14-19, StAR and the Employee Perception Survey would be covered under the Executive Director's Report.

### **05/450 Agenda for Change**

Elaine Bowker made a presentation to the meeting which highlighted the proposals under Agenda for Change. She advised members that the presentation had been used by Mark Haysom at a number of regional roadshows which had been, amongst others, attended by College Principals. She requested that members, for the moment, treat the information as partially confidential but commented that, should the proposed Policy be approved, it would be a 'ground breaking' exercise for the LSC.

She advised members that once the findings of the independent review by Andrew Foster were released in the Autumn, the LSC needed to be in a good position to take things forward. She stressed that any comments made were her own thoughts and opinions and not necessarily LSC Policy.

She went through the presentation explaining that the proposed new system would be rolled out to Colleges in the first instance and then expanded to WBL – at this point there were no plans to include Schools.

Whilst showing support for proposed changes, several Council members expressed concern at a possible fall in quality, standards and/or diversity. Elaine emphasised that the proposals were still in the developmental stages and stressed to members that the aim would be to improve across all areas. She advised members that they would be kept fully informed of all developments.

Roger Hoyle commented that this had been a valuable introduction to the proposals and assured members that the LSC would be working closely with providers on this very ambitious proposal.

*Phil Round joined the meeting.*

### **05/451 Discretionary Funds 2005/06**

Sue Wood referred members to Annex 4 of the Discretionary Funds paper contained within their packs which provided members with a budgetary overview of Discretionary Funds for 2005/06.

She then referred to Annex 2 (projects approved by Senior Management following recommendations from Planning Group) and provided additional information on several of the projects listed. Elaine Bowker emphasised that any costs over £150,000 required the Council to give delegated authority to the Executive Director.

Council members expressed some concern regarding the range of information presented in these proposals.

The Chairman explained that, whilst additional information would, with hindsight, have been appropriate, the issues had been kept brief as they had been previously considered by members.

There was a discussion of the issues. Council APPROVED the Discretionary Fund proposals.

Elaine Bowker referred Council to Annex 3 and explained that the LSC had invested considerable time in managing the relationship with F.E. colleges due to the budgetary pressures they faced. Dave Brennan explained the principles of the new financial planning process which moved from a 'bidding' process to a future planning and formula based allocation process which should enable an improved process and better outcomes.

### **05/452 Executive Director's Report**

*Cllr Richard Marbrow expressed an interest in any discussion relating to Liverpool StAR.*

Elaine Bowker referred members to Annex B of her Report which related to 14-19 Collaboration in Liverpool. Mike McDermott advised Council that, whilst there was still a mixed picture with regard to delivery and participation, there had been a lot of good work undertaken in the collaboratives. He felt, however, that the curriculum offer now needed to be expanded, specifically at Key Stage 4 and greater use made of specialist status and ALPS. He advised members that the key recommendations would be discussed further with each of the collaboratives and further discussed at the meetings held between Colin Hilton and the LSC's SMT (which were held on a six weekly basis).

*Dr Maureen Williams and Peter Morton left the meeting.*

Referring to the Alt Valley collaborative, and in response to a question from the Chair, Mike McDermott advised Council that, whilst the collaborative was working to implement their proposals, there was still more work to be done. He requested a steer from members as to the level of detail they required in future reports. Council agreed that this now needed to be progressed and felt that any issues could be picked up at the next Young Peoples' Advisory Committee (YPAC) meeting on 2 August. Mike was requested to provide a full report to this meeting.

*Claire Dove left the meeting.*

Elaine Bowker referred members back to the Executive Director's Report, specifically page 1, Work Based Learning.

Dave Brennan updated the meeting on Work Based Learning budget and Policy changes as follows:

- WBL, overall budget in 2005/06 had increased by just over 1% to that of 2004/05
- 16-18/E2E, rates have increased by 2½%
- 19+ Apprenticeships, rates reduced by 6%

He advised members that the target, agreed with the DfES, is to achieve a 75% increase in framework achievements. Providers would also receive greater rewards for completion of the full framework. He directed members to Annex A of the Executive Director's Report which outlined all Policy changes.

In response to a question regarding possible shortfall in funds, Kirsty Evans advised members that there would be various smaller budgets, which had not been identified in the Report, which would cover this.

### **05/453 Feedback from Advisory Committees**

**Workforce Development Advisory Committee** – John Firr updated the meeting on discussions held at the meeting, specifically in relation to SkillWorks. SkillWorks had proved to be a great success and he felt that Council should give consideration to 'Branding' it as it would continue to be an excellent model for the future. John also highlighted the discussions which had taken place relating to the Business Link contract. The next Workforce Development Advisory Committee meeting would be held on 23 September 2005.

**Performance, Quality and Audit Committee** – Heather Akehurst advised the members that the meeting had discussed several important issues such as PFA resources, Internal Annual Audit Report –she congratulated staff on the very positive report received, the Annual Assurance Statement – which had been approved by the Executive Director subject to minor amendments and, finally, the Risk Register. The next Performance, Quality and Audit Committee meeting would be held on 7 September 2005.

**Young Peoples' Advisory Committee** – there had not been a meeting since the last Council meeting.

**Adult Advisory Committee** - Martin Carey advised members that it had been an interesting meeting where they had voted on EDIMs and he congratulated Sue Wood and her team on the hard work which they had undertaken on this. He reminded members that there would be a lunchtime session on EDIMs on 21 July 2005.

### **05/454 Updates from Observer Organisations**

GONW – Jane Wylde provided an update on behalf of Nigel Burke as follows:

- 14-19 regional development and cross regional group – it had been agreed at a recent BSNW meeting that the north west would be seen as a vehicle to take issues forward;

- 'Youth Matters' Green Paper – this was a consultation for response by 4 November 2005. Roger Hoyle felt that Council should give some consideration to responding to this Paper. Elaine agreed to circulate a briefing note she had received on this. **Action: Elaine Bowker**

Connexions – Kieran Gordon referred members to his update and agreed to conduct a short presentation at the next council meeting on NEET.

**Action: Kieran Gordon**

Business Link North West – Peter Morton had left the meeting earlier.

Jobcentre Plus – Mike Scott informed the meeting on developments, and advised that JC+ are focussing on the economically inactive, and those on incapacity benefit in Liverpool and Wirral.

### **05/455 Any Other Business**

Elaine Bowker advised members that she had appointed a team of consultants to take forward issues raised through the recent Staff Perception survey. She distributed a detailed report on outcomes of the survey and requested members to bring their comments to the next meeting. **Action: All**

### **05/456 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the LSC Greater Merseyside Council would be held on 4 October 2005.