

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 23 May 2006
Subject Council Meeting
Location Tithebarn House
Time 4.00 pm
LSC office Greater Merseyside
Publication intent Internal

Present

Council: Roger Hoyle (Chair), Elaine Bowker, Heather Akehurst, Gordon Burns, Martin Carey, Claire Dove, Richard Marbrow, Elaine Owen, Phil Round, George Sweeney, Maureen Williams.

Observers: Kieran Gordon (Connexions), Elaine Masterson on behalf of Jackie Mason (JCP)

In attendance: Marie Brookfield, Kirsty Evans, Michael McDermott, Kevin Mothersdale, Sue Price, Joyce Wildman (Minutes).

Apologies

Council: Kath Boullen, Sue Carmichael, John Firr, Brian Rourke, John Swain.

Observers: Nigel Burke, Peter Morton (BLGM).

In attendance: Karon Brownbill, Simon Pierce, Nicola Scott, Sue Wood.

Item 1. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

1.1 Welcome

Roger Hoyle welcomed members to the fifth meeting of the year.

He conveyed Council's congratulations to the newly appointed Partnership Directors (Sue Price, Simon Pierce, Kevin Mothersdale, Mike McDermott and Nicola Scott), Karon Brownbill, who had been appointed to Economic Development Director, and Kirsty Evans who had been appointed Regional Train 2 Gain Director.

Roger provided a brief overview of items to be discussed during the meeting and advised Council that the proposed workshop sessions to consider the FE White Paper and Train 2 Gain would not now be taking place, as both of these topics would be covered at length during the NW Council event at the

Low Wood Hotel in June. He requested members to inform Marie Brookfield, by the end of the week, whether they would be attending the event at the Low Wood Hotel.

Roger provided brief feedback on recent meetings which he had attended, including:

- non-Exec Working Party;
- meeting with NWDA Chair, Brian Gray;
- meeting with John Korzeniewski and John Taylor (Principal of Sheffield College and National Council Chair for Yorkshire and Humberside);
- Chairs' Day with Chris Banks;
- Opening of CoVE at Manchester Academy;
- Regional Management Board.

Item 2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 MAY

2.1 Minutes – the minutes were agreed as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

2.2 Summary – there were no summarised minutes to consider.

2.3 Matters arising – there were no matters arising.

Item 3. AGENDA FOR CHANGE

3.1 Elaine Bowker updated the meeting on progress with regard to Agenda for Change – Theme 7. She advised Council that Band 5 and 4 interviews and appointments had now been made and, in the Merseyside office, 6 of the 7 Band 4 Director vacancies had been filled, as follows:

- Sefton – Michael McDermott;
- Liverpool – Susan Price;
- Halton – Kevin Mothersdale;
- St Helens – Nicola Scott;
- Wirral – Simon Pierce;
- Knowsley – vacancy;
- Economic Development – Karon Brownbill.

As previously advised by the Chair, Kirsty Evans, current Director Strategy and Finance, had been appointed to a Regional post as Director of Train 2 Gain.

Elaine advised that the process for Band 3 appointments was ongoing and commented that the original target date for completion of Theme 7, 1 June, had slipped and that it would now be several weeks, possibly the end of July, before the whole process was complete.

There had been a great deal of requests for severance, which had now been authorized, though this still left the LSC with sufficient staff to cover the required roles. She emphasised that the Greater Merseyside office was not seen as a high risk office.

Martin Carey joined the meeting.

Council congratulated the Chair and ED on the way in which both they and their staff continued to conduct LSC business during this difficult time and requested that their thanks also be conveyed to Sue Wood for the support and contribution which she had made to Council in the past.

Action: Chair to write to Sue Wood on Council's behalf.

3.2 Streamlining accountabilities – Roger referred Council to the paper which had been previously distributed and which provided a background to discussions being held in collaboration with Chris Banks and other Chairs. He advised that a small working group had been formed, which comprising several Regional Chairs (including Roger) and Executives, to review the functions which had been delegated to local Councils and to consider the future role. They had also discussed functions carried out at National, Regional and local levels.

Roger stressed to members that, for the North West, he supported the retention of the local focus and acknowledged the coherence which mapped across sub-regional partnerships and provided a strategic local overview which engaged stakeholders.

Roger advised Council that the next Working Group meeting would be held on 2 June and he requested member's forward their views to him prior to the meeting. Council would have an opportunity to discuss this function further at the Regional Council event at the Low Wood.

Council members raised the following questions:

- How can areas be compared and boundaries managed? – *Roger commented that there would never be a perfect solution but there did need to be effective management of underlying issues;*
- Is work continuing to strengthen Borough links? – *Elaine advised that these links would continue to be strengthened, especially as each Borough had now been allocated an individual Partnership Director;*

Claire Dove joined the meeting.

- Will there still be a meaningful role for local Councils? – *Roger commented that local representation would still be required to ensure better local understanding on local issues and support the executive teams;*

- If Regional Councils haven't worked in the past, why will they work now? – *Roger explained that, as local Councils added value, a local skills body would be retained to feed into Regional Boards;*

Item 4. PRESENTATIONS ON WHITE PAPER AND TRAIN 2 GAIN

4.1 FE White Paper – Elaine provided Council with a brief overview of the recent FE White Paper which sent a headline message that FE would be transformed to deliver the Government's agenda, in line with recommendations from the Foster Review and linked to Agenda for Change. She commented that Merseyside was well placed to deal with the new challenges and advised members that the presentation would be circulated to all members for the information and consideration.

Council raised concerns with regard to specific local issues, such as BME and Women into Management. Elaine acknowledged the concerns raised and commented that the LSC would have the freedom to influence/implement local targets and the local agenda.

Kieran Gordon left the meeting.

4.2 Train 2 Gain – Kirsty Evans briefly led the meeting through a presentation outlining the proposals of Train to Gain. Council raised the following questions:

- How could the system be 'rolled out' if details had still not been agreed? – *Kirsty advised that it was the admin tasks which still needed to be defined. Financial issues had been agreed;*
- How will this look more attractive to employers than what is currently available? – *Kirsty commented that the Brokerage service would be the main attraction to employers.*

Roger thanked Kirsty for her presentation and reminded members that they would have further opportunity to consider both the FE White Paper and Train 2 Gain at the Regional event at Low Wood on 16 June.

Action: Marie Brookfield to circulate both presentations to members

Item 5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

5.1 Elaine advised Council that, in addition to issues covered in her Report, she had several items on which she needed to update members. These were:
Sefton Competition – 2 bids had been received. It was vitally important that as many members as possible attended the special meeting on 28 July were these bids would be considered.

Vauxhall – following the announcement of major job losses at the Vauxhall Plant in Ellesmere Port, the LSC had compiled a package of support.

Cheshire and Warrington would be the lead office – although many of the workers were from the Merseyside area.

Craig Phillips Building Centre – *Sir George Sweeney expressed an interest in this item.* The Centre, which was an independent venture which had received a lot of support from the LSC and Knowsley Community College, had come into financial difficulties. Subsequently, Knowsley Community College had decided to withdraw its learners, whose education would be safeguarded. A press statement was currently being prepared.

Halton Merger – the file had been forwarded to the Secretary of State and the proposal appeared to be progressing well. There were, however, two issues, i) Widnes and Runcorn Sixth Form College had received the worst inspection report in the Country, and ii) Derek Twigg had raised concerns about the proposed new name, Riverside College Halton, for the merged colleges. Elaine asked that, should members be questioned on either of the above, they comment that the LSC continued to act in a pro-active manner and currently proposes to run a competition with regard to the name.

Elaine advised members that the remainder of her Report was for their information.

Item 6. FEEDBACK FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

6.1 Young Peoples Advisory Committee - in the absence of the Chair, Elaine informed Council of discussions held at the meeting held on 27 April. The main issues discussed were Youth Matters and 16-18 Provision, specifically NEET. Elaine advised that she had requested, from Connexions, individual names of learners who were not engaging in education or training.

Item 7. UPDATE FROM OBSERVER ORGANISATIONS

Connexions – Kieran Gordon had left a report for circulation.

Action: Marie Brookfield to circulate Kieran Gordon's report

Job Centre Plus – there was no report to consider from Job Centre Plus.

Business Link – Council noted the comments of the report provided by Peter Fletcher.

Item 8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Roger advised Council that the next meeting was scheduled for 18 July. As he was unable to Chair this meeting, owing to other commitments, he proposed that the meeting was:

i) either brought forward one week to 11 July;

or

ii) Claire Dove, as Vice Chair, Chair the meeting.

Action: Marie Brookfield to contact members to determine choice.

Meeting chair	Roger Hoyle
Minute taker	Joyce Wildman
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