

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**MINUTE NUMBER 04/365 TO 04/374**

**MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL GREATER MERSEYSIDE  
MEETING OF 25 MAY 2004**

**PRESENT:** Claire Dove MBE (Deputy Chair), Paul Holme (Executive Director), Heather Akehurst, Kath Boullen, Gordon Burns, Dr Martin Carey, Sue Carmichael, John Firr, Elaine Owen, Sir George Sweeney, John Swain

**APOLOGIES:** Roger Hoyle (Chair), David Atkin, Richard Marbrow, Phil Round, Dr Maureen Williams

**OBSERVERS:** Peter Morton (GME), Kieran Gordon (GM Connexions), George Maguire (Jobcentre Plus), Pam Flynn (GONW)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Elaine Bowker, Dave Brennan, Sue Wood, Bob Cooney and Vicky Sinclair (Council Support)

**04/375 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

Claire Dove offered Roger Hoyle's apologies for the meeting and welcomed Peter Morton, Chief Executive of Greater Merseyside Enterprise and Pam Flynn from GONW to their first Council meeting as Observers. Council Members were asked to contact Council Support with their availability if they had not yet attended a review meeting with Roger for the first half of 2004.

Those Council Members who had attended the NW Council Event in Cumbria on 21 May gave some positive feedback from the event which it was felt had been a success. Some concerns were expressed over the low number of Council Member attendees from other offices, this was felt to be as a result of the timing and geographic location of the event. Members felt that as the last event had been held at the same venue, it would be helpful to share the day around the region. Members noted that a report of the day was being produced and would be circulated on completion.

Claire introduced the agenda to be discussed at the meeting. Members noted that the paper for agenda item number 4 would be tabled at the meeting. Apologies were noted from absent Members.

**04/376 MINUTES OF THE 20 APRIL 2004**

Minutes were AGREED and signed as a true and accurate record.

**04/377 SUMMARY OF THE 20 APRIL 2004**

Summary was AGREED and signed as a true and accurate record.

**04/378 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**04/379 PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE 2003/04**

Members noted the paper introduced by Elaine Bowker. Members noted the background issues to performance, particularly that:

- final admin expenditure would be well within budget
- performance against the programme budget shows an overspend due both to success of programmes and capital costs incorrectly charged to LLSC
- programme performance to end of March 2004 moving in a positive direction with particular successes in participation and WBL

Council Members discussed the implications of future challenges on programme performance, particularly with regard to targets on Apprentices, and any particular areas of concern for the Executive. Members discussed opportunities for the marketing of the Apprenticeship brand along with current capacity concerns. It was noted that the Executive would work with Connexions on solutions to drop out rates of Y12 pupils. John Swain requested a briefing on any key issues in the Halton area and offered his support. Members discussed the need to highlight to National Council the unrealistic targets. Members AGREED that the Executive Director and Chair should ensure that both the Regional Director and National Council are aware of the very stretching MA starts target.

#### **04/380            PROGRAMME BUDGETS AND TARGETS 2004/05**

Paul Holme set the context for the paper with regard to national and regional budget positions. Paul apologised for the late tabling of the paper and Members noted that this was due to the ongoing nature of the budget discussions and from a keenness to ensure that Members were presented with the most current information.

Members discussed the likely budget challenges ahead and the difficult decisions that may need to be made in the coming months. Paul advised Members that there had been some recent open and frank meetings with College Principals to discuss the issues and effects on the planning cycle. It was further noted that Mark Haysom was to present to NW Colleges on 7 June and the Association of Colleges had received a briefing from National Office.

George Sweeney left the Meeting.

Members read the paper.

Dave Brennan presented the paper to Members who noted that some targets for 04/05 were subject to alteration dependant on final budget allocations. Other targets are yet to be notified by National Office. Members noted the work undertaken with providers to ensure contracting can take place swiftly once budgets are received.

Members AGREED to await final figures before raising any further issues.

#### **04/381            DISCRETIONARY BUDGETS 2004/05**

Sue Wood presented the paper to Members providing an overview of the current position regarding Discretionary funds and themes and allocations for the coming financial year.

Members noted the levels of:

- forward commitments and the impact upon the LIDF Budget
- TEC legacy funds available
- uncommitted ESF Priority Two funds in certain Measures

Members further AGREED:

- recommended investment principles for the use of LIDF and TEC Legacy
- indicative spend for TEC Legacy
- proposed investment themes and broad funding priorities
- recommended appraisal process
- timescales for appraisal and procurement activity.

#### **04/382 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Paul asked that Members note paragraph 5 of the report relating to the recently advertised vacancies in the organisation.

Paul updated Members on current relationships with NWDA advising Members that a National concordat on skills would be signed in the week ending 28 May. Dialogue was also continuing in the North West with the ASP Board regarding delivery plans.

Members were advised that a Capital Funding Bid had been received from Widnes and Runcorn Sixth Form College regarding the acquisition of Bridgewater House. It had not been possible to bring the bid to Council as it was yet to be finalised and Paul informed Members that a small sub group may need to be brought together to discuss and take a decision on the bid when it had been finalised.

Members noted recent attendance by Bryan Sanderson and Mark Haysom at the Educational Select Committee – a link to the transcript will be circulated.

#### **04/383 FEEDBACK FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

Members requested that the dates for the Committees be re-circulated.

##### **Young Peoples' Advisory Committee**

Elaine advised Members in Richard Marbrow's absence of current key discussions in areas of Liverpool Schools and Construction. Members noted that agendas are now based around progress against AWI and programme performance.

##### **Performance Quality and Audit**

Heather Akehurst requested that Members consider joining the Committee as recent meetings had again been cancelled due to a lack of quorum. This issue had been raised in a recent LSC Internal Audit and was now of some concern. Heather advised Members that the next meeting would be held on 12 June and that Elaine Owen had agreed to become a member.

##### **Adult Advisory Committee**

Martin Carey advised Members that meetings were now planned to run in parallel with key points in the StAR process. Caution had been recommended on recent data received regarding the Basic Skills. These issues would be discussed in greater detail at a future Council Meeting. Members were advised that Terms of Reference for the Committee were currently under review and further volunteers for the Committee were sought.

##### **Workforce Development Advisory Committee**

There had not been a Meeting of the Committee since the last Council Meeting.

**04/384            UPDATES FROM OBSERVER ORGANISATIONS**

**Government Office NW**

There was no formal report from GONW.

**Greater Merseyside Enterprises**

Peter Morton advised Members of the work currently underway to move the organisation forward across the sub-region. Members were asked to note that the organisation would now be known as Business Link Greater Merseyside to aid in customer recognition. It was felt that this name would also relate more to partner organisations.

**GM Connexions**

Kieran Gordon presented an update paper for Members' information. Members noted detailed performance reports available highlighted marked performance differences across districts.

Members noted forthcoming Greater Merseyside Higher Education Conference.

**Jobcentre Plus**

George Maguire updated Members on the current stage of restructuring in the Jobcentre Plus noting that Mike Scott was now designated Manager of the merged Liverpool / Wirral service.

**04/385            DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Meeting would take place on Tuesday 20 July 2004 at Tithebarn House.