

<b>Date</b>	25 September 2006
<b>Subject</b>	Council Meeting
<b>Location</b>	Tithebarn House
<b>Time</b>	4.00 pm
<b>LSC office</b>	Greater Merseyside
<b>Publication intent</b>	Internal

## Present

Council: Roger Hoyle (Chair), Mike McDermott, Kath Boullen, Sue Carmichael, Elaine Owen, Martin Carey, Phil Round

Observers:

In attendance: Simon Pierce, Karon Brownbill, Shelagh Page (minutes)

## Apologies

Council: Claire Dove, Gordon Burns, Brian Rourke, John Swain, George Sweeney, Maureen Williams, John Firr

Observers:

In attendance: Kevin Mothersdale, Nicola Scott, Sue Price

## Item 1. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

### 1.1 Welcome

Roger Hoyle welcomed members to the eighth meeting of the year. He congratulated Mike McDermott on his appointment as interim Director of Area, Greater Merseyside, and the Council formally recognised Mike as a member of the local Council, to succeed Elaine Bowker.

Roger advised that there would be one substantive item on the agenda for this meeting, "Streamlining of Accountabilities."

1.2 Roger requested members to complete the Register of Interests.

## Item 2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JULY

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

2.2 **Summary** – these were agreed as an accurate record.

2.3 **Matters arising** – there were no matters arising.

### **Item 3. STREAMLINING OF ACCOUNTABILITIES**

- 3.1** Council had been circulated with the letter from Chris Banks, dated 15 September, headed 'Streamlining LSC Accountability' and Roger told the meeting that he would like to hear the reactions of Council members to the letter and to focus on what Roger and the Council might do to take forward the work that had been done so that it might be of future benefit to Merseyside.
- 3.2** Roger informed the meeting that he had met with the RDA and The Mersey Partnership and felt optimistic that there was still a role for Council members to play in the region.
- 3.3** Roger said he believed that Councils made a big difference and that there was a need for a non-executive group in influencing, engaging with, and understanding the needs of their local area . However, he understood where Ministers were coming from as there were currently a plethora of different initiatives from too many bodies.
- 3.4** Feedback to Chris Banks' letter from Council members included the following issues:-
- It was felt that there were now too few formal mechanisms to engage employers on important issues.
  - The private sector was asking how it would be able to fit into the proposed structure in order to give input into the future skills agenda.
  - There was some suspicion that there was an end-game, ie. regionalisation, and this needed to be understood. The structure needed to identify and articulate local needs.
  - There was some support for streamlining and getting people around the table to make a difference. If the Council did not make a difference it may as well move on.
  - The Council should define the functions necessary to support the development of skills and training and make an assertive statement saying 'this is what is needed'.
  - There were particular issues on Merseyside and the existing Council members were well placed to advise officers of the Council about the kind of structures that would advance those issues.
  - Training was currently driven by cost. There was a need to get the right skills in the right mix. There was also a need for a diverse group of people to discuss and provide advice to executive officers of the LSC.
  - We were moving to a position where learners are the units of economic development and focus is being taken away from learners as individuals. Learners and employers were equal.
- 3.5** There was some discussion about joining with Local Partnership groups and the following points were made:-
- Local partnerships had asked how they could influence the agenda if they were not represented.

- LSPs were very useful organisations but meetings were often too large to be meaningful.
- As an outcome of recent discussions that Roger and Mike had with The Mersey Partnership, Roger could foresee the possibility of a local Skills Board, which would exercise influence on the LSC.
- There would be a Regional Statement of Skills in October. If there were a distinct set of needs, there was a lack of conviction that they could be championed within the LSP structure. A Skills Board may be better.
- Some elements of Ken Livingstone's proposal for a London Skills Board may be appropriate here. Karon was asked to provide a briefing on the London proposals when some progress had been made.

**Action: Karon to provide a briefing in time for Residential in December**

- 3.6** There was still a great deal that the Council could do to support the embedding of the new arrangements and in carrying on the work it had been doing. There were a lot of opportunities to get closer to specific partners and engage with local partnerships very effectively.
- 3.7** Finally, Roger reminded Council members that the proposed changes were subject to legislation and there was a small chance that it may fall as it goes through Parliament or it could take longer than a year.
- 3.8** Martin asked if it was possible for Council members to meet individually with the executive team in order to define more clearly where we were going.
- 3.9** However, Roger suggested that the Residential in early December would be an ideal time to discuss what the stance of the Council should be. There was some concern that this would be too late to influence the wider agenda but Roger and Mike felt that more information would be available at that time, and the business cycle would be underway, which would aid meaningful discussion.

**Action: Shelagh to place Streamlining of Accountabilities on agenda for Residential**

- 3.10** Roger and John K were shortly to meet with the Chair and Chief Executive of the North West Development Agency. There were indications that the RDA believed that the north-west should have some sub-regional arrangements.
- 3.11** Also, Roger and Mike were due to meet with the Chair and Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council. There was a need to gauge what our major partners want as we need high level political support.
- 3.12** It was also agreed that Roger and Mike should meet with other Greater Merseyside local authorities.

**Action: Roger and Mike to arrange to visit local authorities in Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens Wirral and Halton**

- 3.13** Roger asked Council members to canvass views from their colleagues and to let RH know what opinion in our area was.

**Action: Council to canvass opinion and feedback to the Chairman**

#### **Item 4. SEFTON COMPETITIONS UPDATE**

- 4.1** Capital proposals were expected to go forward in the next 4-6 weeks. Kevin Mothersdale had been asked to have an oversight of strategic issues for Sefton.

#### **Item 5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 5.1** The Council would next meet at Council Away Day and Workshop on 5th and 6th December at Thornton Hall, Wirral.

<b>Meeting chair</b>	Roger Hoyle
<b>Minute taker</b>	Shelagh Page
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