

**SUMMARY OF THE GREATER MERSEYSIDE
LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2001 AT
TITHEBARN HOUSE, LIVERPOOL**

PRESENT: Jim Michie (Chair), Paul Holme, David Atkin, Kath Boullen, Gordon Burns, Martin Carey, Sue Carmichael, Brian Davies, Mike Doyle, John Firr, Heather Hardcastle, Veronica Laird, Richard Marbrow, Geoffrey Piper, George Sweeney

(OBSERVERS) David Duff (Government Office for the North West)
Keiran Gordon (Connexions Partnership) –(part)
Brian Kearsley (Employment Service)

IN ATTENDANCE: Clare Caffrey (Secretary to the Council), Richard Merritt

APOLOGIES: Claire Dove, Mark Trousdale (Observer)

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Local Council Members, Mr Brian Kearsley, Assistant Regional Director, Employment Service, and Observers who would attend future Meetings. Local Council Members noted their responsibilities regarding the Declaration of Interests Form for the Local Council's Register of Interests, which will be available to the public locally and at the Coventry National Office.

Local Council Members considered that the majority of future meetings would be held at Tithebarn House but that two to three times a year they should be held at an alternative venue, linked to visits to other organisations and learning establishments.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Local Council Members agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate record and should be signed by the Chair.

SUMMARY OF THE LAST MEETING

Local Council Members reviewed the content of the Summary and agreed it was an accurate record and should be signed by the Chair. Issues arising from the Summary were discussed and Local Council Members requested that the Secretary to the Council circulate the comprehensive list of intended recipients list to Council Members for them to confirm that all parties were included.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Staff and Management of Change

The Executive Director confirmed that there were four weeks before the organisation became operational and they noted that many staff were contributing to the set up of the LSC, as well as their TEC roles. He confirmed that final staff numbers transferring to the LSC were likely to be between 170 and 180.

Education Business Links

Against a background of the Education Business Links being funded by core funding, Local Council Members learned of the need for the Local Council to make a contribution towards Education Business Links from the Local Initiative Fund.

White Paper

Referring to the Executive Summary of the White Paper, the Executive Director reminded Local Council Members of the importance attached to the Local Council's relationship, at all levels, with the Regional Development Agency.

Local Council Members noted the importance of ensuring that the Local Council was involved in any debate regarding Centres of Excellence and in any discussions regarding any Merseyside notion of "Centres of Excellence".

Observers

Local Council Members noted that Observers represented external bodies at the Meetings and that the same person should normally be present for each meeting but that they should highlight any issues regarding the Local Council's connection with their respective organisations. Observers would not participate in the event of formal votes.

LOCAL INITIATIVE FUND (LIF)

Local Council Members noted the scale of the LIF for 2001/2002 and that the Local Council expected to receive legacies from existing organisations which would require flexible, responsible management. At the present time it was difficult to estimate exactly how much the cumulative total of the funds would be and a number of proposals had been put forward for the use of the funds.

Local Council Members noted their responsibility to act collectively to ensure an appropriate spread of funding throughout the Greater Merseyside area, not necessarily based on geography alone and having discussed potential difficulties in the allocation of discretionary funding, Local Council Members requested regular reports from Management regarding discretionary expenditure and further aspects of this issue would be discussed at the April Meeting. Also the need was stressed to avoid a "bidding culture" while having a clear focus on strategy and in managing expectations.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Local Council Members requested that any information provided encapsulated the Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council's "brand" and that the brand/image for the Greater Merseyside area should include "pride and loyalty to Greater Merseyside area".

Following discussion about the promotion and facilitation of Government projects, Local Council Members noted the need to promote learning generally, in addition to targeting programmes with providers and recognising that the Local Council would have different customers with different needs.

Local Council Members noted the extremely positive response arising from the Executive Director's attendance at a recent meeting with School Heads and requested that updates should be received when the marketing budget is known.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' INDUCTION

Local Council Members felt that consideration should be given to inviting individual Council Members to make presentations on subjects in which they were expert.

STANDING REPORTS

Local Council Members received a short presentation from each of the Observers present, noting progress made and areas of joint interest with the Local Council.

The Chair thanked each Observer for their contribution on behalf of Local Council Members.

NATIONAL LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL

George Sweeney made a short presentation, as a Member of the National Council and Local Council Members noted that with the exception of the Director of Communications post, most senior management posts had now been filled. The National Council had now held four meetings and were now focussing on key strategic issues. The National Council recognised that the pace of change had resulted in many Local Councils having to take decisions before National guidance had been received but overall good progress was being made.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Chief Executive's Visit

John Harwood would be visiting Liverpool Community College on 23 May, coinciding with the date of a Local Council Meeting. He had been invited to spend part of the day with the Local Council and to attend the meeting and, in addition, the North West Executive Directors had invited him to their April meeting.

The Merseyside Economic Forum

Geoffrey Piper declared his interest in this item as a Director of the Mersey Partnership.

Geoffrey informed Local Council Members that the Merseyside Economic Forum (MEF) was now being incorporated into The Mersey Partnership (TMP). The MEF was a strategic planning group for Merseyside and had a wide membership.

Geoffrey suggested that consideration should be given to a small number of Council Members to include the Chair, the Executive Director and Mike Doyle meeting with a small group from the Mersey Partnership, to examine what may be sensible and then to bring back recommendations to the Local Council. During discussion it was thought that a meeting should take place and a report provided for Local Council Members at a future date.

Breakfast Launch

The Chair reminded Local Council Members that a breakfast launch for Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council was scheduled to take place on 26 March. It was envisaged that this would begin at 9:00-9:30am and he encouraged Local Council Members to attend.