

(IN CONFIDENCE)

MINUTE NUMBER 04/399 – 04/413

**LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL GREATER MERSEYSIDE
COUNCIL WORKSHOP
7 AND 8 DECEMBER 2004
THORNTON HALL HOTEL, THORNTON HOUGH, WIRRAL**

7 DECEMBER

PRESENT: Roger Hoyle (Chair), Elaine Bowker (Executive Director), Heather Akehurst, Dave Atkin, Kath Boullen, Gordon Burns, Dr Martin Carey, Sue Carmichael, Claire Dove MBE, Elaine Owen, Sir George Sweeney

IN ATTENDANCE: David Brennan, Sue Wood, John Korzeniewski, Paul Holme (dinner only), Marie Brookfield and Laura Edwards (Minutes)

Workshops only: Kirsty Evans, Christine Troughton, Simon Pierce, Hannah Furniss, Carole Smith,

APOLOGIES: John Firr, Cllr Richard Marbrow, Phil Round, John Swain, Dr Maureen Williams

OBSERVERS: Kieran Gordon (Greater Merseyside Connexions), George Maguire (Job Centre Plus), Peter Morton (Greater Merseyside Enterprises)

04/399 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

Roger Hoyle welcomed Members to the last Council meeting of 2004 and to the annual two day workshops. He introduced John Korzeniewski, Regional Director North West Learning and Skills Councils.

The Chair welcomed Elaine Bowker, as a newly appointed Executive Director and referred to Paul Holme's secondment as North West Regional Skills Director. Welcomes were also extended to Marie Brookfield and Laura Edwards who would be supporting the Council for the first time.

The Chair announced that it was to be Dave Atkin's last meeting and thanked him for his support and services over the years. The process of appointing a new Council Member was underway and Roger will be writing to all secondary school headteachers.

The Chair announced that Chris Banks, Chair National LSC, would be joining the meeting on the second day and introduced the items and objectives for discussion and agenda for the next two days.

04/400 SETTING THE SCENE

The Chair referred to the launch of the National Statement of Priorities event that took place at Haydock Racecourse on 2 December 2004. The DVD from the event was played again as an important landmark to set the scene for the next year. The Executive Director then gave an overview of national, regional and local priorities and explained that the following workshops would be an opportunity for Council Members to influence the local plan.

04/401

WORKSHOPS

Members split into three breakout groups and received three presentations from staff around FE, 14-19, and Equality and Diversity, with opportunity for discussion around the emerging issues.

Staff gave verbal feedback on their workshops. Kirsty Evans fed back from the 14-19 sessions that there was a desire by Council for LSCGM to be bold and innovative in the best interests of the learner, they were keen to help with consultation and took the view that whilst collaboration was integral, more emphasis was needed on how it is governed.

Simon Pierce fed back from the FE discussions that there were recurring themes in the three groups; there is a complex approach to agreeing provision and a need to be sensitive. 'Non demand led' provision also should be included, Council Members wished to understand the challenge so they could champion the agenda.

Carole Smith gave feedback from the Equality and Diversity workshops including suggestions to promote and champion our successes more, to be clear about our local priorities, targeting resources towards disadvantaged postcodes and groups and to take the appropriate steps to become an 'employer of choice'. There was a further view that each Advisory Committee should assist in moving forward key projects in the areas identified that would 'make a difference' in moving forward the LSC Equality and Diversity agenda.

The Chair thanked LSCGM staff for their efforts in producing and delivering the sessions and asked Council Members to return evaluation forms to be fed back tomorrow.

04/402 DINNER DISCUSSION WITH Sir Joe Dywer, Steve Howsley and Guy Lawson

The Chair introduced Sir Joe Dwyer and Guy Lawson from Construction for Merseyside and Steve Howsley from CITB. Paul Holme arrived to join the dinner discussion.

Sir Joe explained the reason for his visit was to discuss the demand and supply side of the construction industry.

Discussion followed on Local Authorities facing housing renewal stock on a large scale, with reference to the Heartlands programme. The problems on the supply side of the industry in dealing with this were explained by Sir Joe as being due to changes in the structure of the industry. Few companies were training and an explosion in self-employment meant there was little incentive to train. Quality of work within the sub-region is needs improve to stay competitive.

The challenge was to communicate with companies and persuade them to train and encourage growth of SMEs' training.

Guy Lawson presented a series of strands in response to the challenge:

- a) How do we know what skills are required, as much of the research is ad hoc. A construction charter is being developed to address this.
- b) How do we make sure that SMEs are in a position to grow? Through ambition, skills, resource and the market.
- c) How do we make sure that people are encouraged into the industry? By aligning aspirations to where opportunities lie.

- d) What route should be taken to get into the industry? Construction is the first sector to work in partnership with providers and learners to address this.

Steve Howsley explained that Sector Skills Councils provide a way around the problem of employers not being clear about what they want. He proposed that colleges were not able to deliver NVQs in construction properly as there was no site-based evidence and raised the contention that funding sources for this in colleges were lucrative so do not help the problem.

Paul Holme commented that he believed changes in the industry were being underestimated in terms of mobility of labour and technological advances, further discussion was generated on diversity issues within the industry, Capital of Culture and Investors in People.

Following the discussion, the Chair presented Dave Atkin with a gift in appreciation of his service as a Council Member.

8 DECEMBER

PRESENT:

Roger Hoyle (Chair), Elaine Bowker (Executive Director), Heather Akehurst, Dave Atkin, Kath Boullen, Gordon Burns, Dr Martin Carey, Sue Carmichael, Claire Dove MBE, Cllr Richard Marbrow, Elaine Owen, Sir George Sweeney

IN ATTENDANCE:

David Brennan, Sue Wood, Marie Brookfield and Laura Edwards (Facilitators)

APOLOGIES:

John Firr, Phil Round, John Swain, Dr Maureen Williams

OBSERVERS:

Kieran Gordon (Greater Merseyside Connexions), George Maguire (Job Centre Plus), Peter Morton (Greater Merseyside Enterprises)

04/403

APOLOGIES AND CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the second day of the Council workshop and apologies were noted. Roger gave feedback from the evaluation forms following the workshops and responses had been positive. Council Members had found the workshops useful and interesting, although some thought that there had been insufficient time to address all issues.

The Chair gave feedback on recent meetings attended including the Business Skills NW Board and the NWLSCs Regional Management Board.

The Chair announced the itinerary for the day including the visit of Chris Banks who would be joining the meeting at 11am.

04/404

MINUTES AND SUMMARY OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes and summary were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record.

04/405

MATTERS ARISING

Item 04/397 AOB: Equal Opportunities issue has been resolved. Our advertising will reflect the population and diversity of Merseyside.

Item 04/394: Sir George declared an interest – need to be clear what the consultation is on.

04/406

FEEDBACK FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Performance, Quality and Audit:

Heather Akehurst gave feedback from the meeting of 26 November 2004. New Performance Scorecard was reviewed. It was recommended that the Executive Director accepts the Assurance Plan noting caveat regarding timing of ESF work.

Young Peoples':

Cllr Marbrow declared an interest. He gave verbal feedback as the minutes from the 30 November 2004 meeting are not yet available. Strategic Area Review update (discussed later), the PSA Apprenticeship target and issues around quality in E2E approach were discussed.

Workforce Development

Gordon Burns gave feedback from the 18 November 2004 meeting. The meeting included a presentation on improving skills in public services, Skillworks feedback and a presentation on Regional Statement of Skills. General focus on best practices in Greater Merseyside.

04/407 UPDATES FROM OBSERVER ORGANISATIONS

Greater Merseyside Connexions

Kieran Gordon tabled a short paper on behalf of Connexions. The reduction in NEET target had just been reached in Greater Merseyside (provisional figures). Kieran asked for the views of Council on IAG potentially moving away from Connexions into schools when the Green Paper is formally published in January. Kieran requested if Council were in agreement that IAG should remain with Connexions, to raise with National Office. It was AGREED that Elaine Bowker would write to the National Young Peoples' Advisory Committee supporting Connexions.

Greater Merseyside Enterprises

Peter Morton reported that a good working relationship was being maintained with LSCGM.

Job Centre Plus

George Maguire gave an update on management changes. Kevin Adderley is shortly to take up the post of Chief of Strategic Planning in Wirral and Mike Scott is to take on his responsibilities in Liverpool and Sefton. Margaret Woods will take over from George as Council Observer at the next meeting. Roger Hoyle thanked George for his support and wished him well for the future.

04/408 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Amended dates will be circulated to Members. Marie Brookfield to be contacted with any problems.

04/409 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director presented the report for discussion.

The Council were informed that discretionary monies were being used to fund capital for the first time in Greater Merseyside and that this needed Council approval.

ACTION: Elaine, Roger and one other Council Member to meet before January to discuss and approve.

Elaine referred to the excellent outcome of the Knowsley 14-19 AWI, on which the report will be published on 14 February. Knowsley secured the first grade 1 for strategy and for access and participation, and the first overall grade 1.

Changes to internal structure were reported including David Brennan's secondment to Director of Learning Programmes and Mike McDermott to become StAR Coordinator and SMT member.

04/410 2005/06 BUSINESS PLANNING PROCESS: LOCAL STATEMENT OF PRIORITIES

David Brennan presented the plan of annual priorities as a single reference document and a work in progress. He gave an overview of the Business Planning Cycle process whereby the annual plan is reached through discussions with the provider base and recasting priorities. The following workshops were to focus on issues surrounding this.

04/411 WORKSHOPS

Members split into three breakout groups to focus on the local plan in terms of the future workforce, the existing workforce and those outside of the workforce.

(Chris Banks arrived at this point)

When the Council reconvened, the Chair welcomed Chris Banks, Chair National LSC and invited members to introduce themselves.

Feedback was given from each workshop:

Martin Carey fed back from 'those outside of the workforce' group:

Context

The context provides an effective quantitative and qualitative account of the key factors impacting on adults out of work, the group expressed the view that it needed to stress more the following themes: -

- The complexity of reasons involved.
- The complexity of agencies involved.
- The need for linkages to the considerable regeneration activity on Merseyside.
- The socio-domestic context of many lone-parents in areas of high unemployment.
- Stressing the importance of joint working by agencies (is identified in the priorities section).

The joint working theme was discussed at some length and the group felt strongly that there were a number of opportunities for agencies to work much closer together around similar but not necessarily the same targets – e.g. Job Centre Plus targets into employment – LSCGM targets to increase achievement to level 2.

Key recommendation that the contextual statement should be more ambitious and promote not just a development of **local plan but also the development of a local model** – similar to the success of the NHS Academy, Skillsworks and the Logistics College.

Finally need to ensure a focus on practical/tangible outcomes.

Priorities

The following were suggested:-

- No more than three – with some of the existing priorities possibly being merged or acting as a sub-text. Focus on three would possibly encourage a more concerted approach.

- Joint working a common theme in all priorities.
- Linking Priorities to a set of practical/tangible outcomes.

General Comment

This area was seen as critical to the inclusion/ equal opportunity agendas.

Gordon Burns fed back from the 'existing workforce' group:

Analysis

- In line with needs
- Importance of 9 sectors (large employer engagement)

Priorities

- Academy status – consistent approach
- Skillworks – all embracing

Additional

- CoVE sharing best practices
- Leadership/management
- Quality provision
- Equal Opportunities

Richard Marbrow fed back from the 'future workforce' group

Accuracy

- Clarity whether local or national rates (para 2)
- Rates at 16 falling – is this correct (para 3)

Gaps

- Not enough reference to special needs education
- LEAs and school missing as partners
- Entrepreneurship not mentioned

04/412 StAR UPDATE

The Executive Director presented an update on StAR for each borough in Greater Merseyside. The Council were asked for their support as to how to plan and proceed to the next steps. The Council **AGREED** that open consultation should take place in North Liverpool even though the LEA were opposed to this.

Chris Banks commented that the system was working in Greater Merseyside and that he had found the update very helpful. Chris expressed his thanks to Council Members and Executives and was confident that the local statement of priorities would be improved following the contributions from this workshop. Chris agreed with the view of the Council that open consultation was the way forward.

04/413 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business. The Chair thanked Dave Atkin for his contribution as Council Member, the staff who organised the event and the workshop facilitators.