

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 7 February 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 (Executive Director), Kath Boullen, Gordon Burns, Dr Martin Carey, Sue Carmichael, Claire Dove, John Firr, Elaine Owen, Phil Round, John Swain, Dr Maureen Williams.

Observers: Kieran Gordon (Connexions).

In attendance: Michael McDermott, Simon Pierce, Sue Wood, Marie Brookfield and Joyce Wildman (Minutes).

Apologies

Council: Heather Akehurst, Cllr Richard Marbrow, Brian Rourke, Sir George Sweeney.

Observers: Mike Scott, Nigel Burke, Peter Morton (BLGM).

In attendance: Sue Price

Item 1. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

1.1 Welcome

Roger Hoyle welcomed members to the second meeting of the year. He advised Council that Heather Akehurst, had recently given birth to a daughter and that he would ensure that appropriate congratulations were sent. He also advised that John Swain and Elaine Owen had completed their first term of office with the Council and the documentation for the proposed re-appointment should be considered by the Appointments Committee at the end of February.

1.2 Roger provided a brief overview of the agenda items to be discussed and advised that, in view of discussions held during the pre Council meeting, the agenda item relating to Agenda for Change would be carried over until Roger had spoken with Chris Banks, as per Council members' request.

1.3 He provided members with an outline of meetings he had recently attended as follows:

- Regional Management Board – 19 January;
- evening meeting of LFB/LPG Away Day – 24 January;
- NWUA Dinner, celebration of University status for a number of Institutions – 30 January;
- Appointments Committee – 31 January.

Item 2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2006

2.1 Minutes - Members requested:

- minute 2.5 be amended to record..... substantive support for option a) from members who attended the meeting;
- clarification on financial monitoring of the Merger. Elaine assured Council that due diligence would cover any issues which arose.

With these amendments, the minutes were AGREED as an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

2.2 Summary – with the above amendments, the Summary was AGREED as accurate for signing by the Chair.

2.3 Matters arising – There were no matters arising. Roger informed members that he did wish to raise an issue from a previous meeting relating to the Workforce Development Committee and the Young Peoples' Advisory Committee but advised that he would address this later in the meeting.

Item 3. AGENDA FOR CHANGE – THEME 7

3.1 Following discussion at the pre-meeting, and as mentioned during his opening remarks, Roger informed members that this item would be deferred until he had spoken to Chris Banks regarding Council's concerns.

Action: Roger to speak to Chris Banks

Item 4. ANNUAL PLAN

4.1 Roger informed members that, although this was not yet the final draft of the Annual Plan, he felt it was important that Council were given the opportunity to comment. He reminded members that they had already seen a rough first draft of the Annual Plan at their Residential in December 2005.

4.2 Elaine advised Council that this was probably the best plan LSCGM had produced. She had received very positive feedback on the draft plan from National Office. She reminded Council that the Plan still required further work by the Executive Team and this would include suggestions from National Office to:

- include a local vision within the introduction;
- expand the vision to look at the wider agenda;

- integrate equality and diversity throughout the Plan;
 - include graphical data.
- 4.4 Elaine advised the meeting that the Regional Management Team would consider the draft Plan on 16 February 2006 and the final version would be presented to Mark Haysom on 22 February. She enquired whether Council were happy with the contents, actions identified to date and timescales set.
- 4.5 John Swain queried the timetable at point 40 of the Plan (page 11) as follows:
- the Ward of Parr was in the District of St Helens and not Halton as stated;
 - which Town Centre in Halton was referred to on the last line of the table – as Halton actually had three town centres – *this would be checked and clarified.*
- 4.6 Council made the following comments/suggestions for inclusion/improvement:
- target 18 (page 6), last bullet point – the number of completions will be raised to 2,791 **from what**;
 - what counts as a public service and how are transferable generic skills being addressed in the Plan? - *Elaine felt that perhaps the terminology of the Plan should be re-considered as this would be covered by Skills for Life*;
 - the Plan commented on engaging ALL 14-19 year olds but it would be very difficult to engage homeless, etc. – *Elaine referred to page 10 and the challenge listed under point 37, and commented that perhaps this challenge needed to be revised to identify work with Connexions, etc. to reduce NEET*;
 - a clearer link should be made between challenges and proposed solutions;
 - equality and diversity issues could be better explained– *Sue Wood advised that this had been noted and would be picked up in future re-drafts*;
 - quality across all levels – monitoring, evaluating and improving - should be clearly addressed in the Plan;
 - care should be taken how demand-led provision is interpreted, as employers may see Train 2 Gain as the only option and also availability for SMEs should be made clearer (point 8, page 4).
- Council members congratulated the team on the quality of the Plan.
- 4.7 As there were no further comments from Council, Roger thanked Council for their contribution and thanked everyone involved in the compilation of the Plan for their hard work.

Item 5. CAPITAL PLAN

- 5.1 Roger reminded Council that they were required to make decisions on total projects costing above £2.5m.
- 5.2 Simon Pierce presented the latest draft of the Local Capital Plan to Council and reminded them that this had first been discussed at the Council Residential. He advised members that a national working group had been

established to ensure a consistent approach to the development of each Regional Capital Strategy and Local Capital Plan.

5.3 He informed Council that they had been charged, along with the local Management Team, with responsibility to approve the Local Capital Plan – the Local Capital Plan needs to be finalised by the end of March.

5.4 Referring to the Priorities for Greater Merseyside (page 23 of the Plan), Simon advised members that, owing to funding restrictions, the last two bullet points referring to new Vocational Skills Centres in Liverpool and St Helens might need to be revised to 'Investment in Vocational Skills provision, as any new 16-19 development in a Borough might now be subject to Competition rules, as is currently the case in Sefton.

5.5 In response to several questions from members, Simon provided the following responses:

- the NWDA had not been requested to comment on the Local Plan. RDA were, however, already involved in the development of the Regional Strategy;
- a summary of the Regional Capital Strategy would be circulated to Members for their information.

Action: Marie to forward Summary of Regional Capital Strategy to Council members

5.7 Members felt that the Plan should outline any investment made against the outcomes and also suggested that liability be identified, i.e. what happens if provision collapses following Capital investment and reasons why it failed. Sue Carmichael advised that she would speak to Simon outside of the meeting to suggest improvements to the presentation of the plan.

Action: Sue Carmichael to speak to Simon Pierce

5.8 Roger thanked members for their comments and assured them that their concerns would be noted.

Item 6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

6.1 Elaine outlined the following points from her Report.

6.2 Outturn - the under spend identified under Admin had been owing to the non replacement of staff who had left.

6.3 South Sefton Competition – this was the first Competition run in the country and was attracting a lot of interest. All proposals from interested parties must be received by 23 May 2006. A summary would then be produced and a 6 week period allowed for comments. Proposals from the stakeholder panel would be brought to Council in July and the outcomes would be communicated to interested parties in early August 2006.

6.4 Work Based Learning – the number of 16-19 year olds had reduced. Whilst numbers for 16-18 were down on predicted figures, LSCGM compared favourably in the NW on 16-18 year olds. Numbers were also down on 19+. With regard to WBL reshaping, LSCGM had been the first LSC to compare providers against regional thresholds. 5 providers had not been approved to continue delivery of WBL, with a further 25 providers losing some of their

current delivery. The decisions of the Panel had been graciously accepted by all WBL providers.

- 6.5** FE Funding Allocations 2006/07 – these had been distributed to providers by the deadline of 31 January and had included some surprises, especially with regard to Adult funding. In line with one of the LSC priorities, funding had been diverted from Adult to support 16-18 year olds. Elaine advised Council that she would ensure that the Regional Office were made aware that cuts to Adult funding impacted disproportionately on those providers with a large Adult base, i.e. WoTEC, Liverpool Community College and Greenbank. Any under spend on 16-18 would be returned back to the Region and only if another office did not require additional 16-18 funding would access funding be redirected to Adults. Elaine advised that she would compile a few bullet points highlighting the main areas of funding.
- 6.6** Workforce Development (Leadership and Management Programme) – Business Link and KPMG were currently managing this programme and, following Council's concerns that there appeared to be poor take up, Elaine agreed to contact Peter Morton to enquire how the Programme was being promoted.

Action: Elaine to contact Peter Morton

- 6.7** Elaine requested members to note the contents of the remainder of her Report.

Item 7 FEEDBACK FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- 7.1** Roger informed Council that there had not yet been any Advisory Committee meetings during 2006. He and Elaine had, however, met with John Firr and Martin Carey on 17 February to discuss the merger of the Workforce Development Committee and the Adult Advisory Committee. Both Chairs were in agreement of the merger. Council members AGREED to Roger reviewing the membership of all Council Committees and considering a name for the newly created Committee.

Action: Roger to review Committee membership and consider name for new Committee

Item 8 UPDATES FROM OBSERVER

- 8.1 Business Link** – in the absence of Peter Morton, the meeting noted the update from Business Link for Greater Merseyside.
- 8.2 Connexions** – the meeting noted the contents of the update from Kieran Gordon. Elaine highlighted that an area of concern which was developing was that, whilst good progress was being made with 16 year olds, many 17 year olds were failing.
- 8.3 Job Centre Plus** – no update had been received from Job Centre Plus.

Item 9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1** There was no other business to discuss.

Item 10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 10.1** The next Council meeting would be held on 4 April 2006 at 4pm at Tithebarn House.
- 10.2** Roger informed members that an additional Council meeting would need to be held in July to consider the Sefton Competition. He asked members to respond to Marie's request for availability, if they had not already done so. He also advised that a further additional meeting would be required to consider progress with the Halton merger. Marie would be contacting members shortly with suggested dates.
- 10.3** He advised members that both of the above additional meetings would be one item agendas.

Action: Marie to circulate proposed dates for additional meeting

Meeting chair	Roger Hoyle
Minute taker	Joyce Wildman
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