

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date	16 th March 2007
Subject	Council Meeting
Location	26 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4AE
Time	09:30
LSC office	Kent and Medway
Publication intent	Internal

Present Council Members	Professor David Melville (Chair) Malcolm Bell Paul Carter Lesley Davies (Area Director) Vernon Hull Anne-Marie Nelson John Parsonage Chris Hearn Angela Jenkins Fiona Pollard Ashley West
Observers LSC staff	Gordon Bernard John Ratcliff Malcolm Staunton Jane Spurgin Heather Gray Ahmad Eslami (Item 6) Kathy Carty Anne Jones
Apologies Council Members	Claire Coday Rose Collinson John Haward (GOSE)
Observers	Lynda Russell (Jobcentre Plus) Alison Clarke (Canterbury College – Item 4) Adrian Cotterill (Canterbury College – Item 4)

Item 1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed and relayed apologies. Tony Allen is on a six month secondment to Skills South East and Jane Ball is on extended sick leave. Secondment appointments will be made to cover these positions in the near future and in the interim Jane Spurgin and Heather Gray will cover their responsibilities with support from Lesley Davies , Malcolm Staunton and John Ratcliff. Members asked for their best wishes to be relayed to Jane Ball.

Item 2. Declaration of Interest

- 2.1 The Chairman invited members to declare any potential conflicts of interest of a substantial or pecuniary nature in relation to the agenda. Anne- Marie Nelson and Chris Hearn declared their interest in respect of agenda item 4 on the capital project for Canterbury College. Anne-Marie is currently a Governor at the college and Chris Hearn is the college banker.

Item 3 Approval of minutes of last meeting (25th January 2007) and progress against actions

- 3.1 The minutes of 25th January were **approved** as an accurate record. The update report showed that the relevant actions had either been completed or were in hand.

Item 4 Canterbury College Capital Project

- 4.1 Canterbury College were part way through a major capital project and it had become apparent that in the original proposal the college's level of borrowing had been based on inaccurate assumptions. The disproportionate costs of servicing the debt on the college was posing a threat to future quality and delivery. The level of borrowing had been queried by the National Capital Committee but had not been pursued.

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- 4.2 The project had been fully reviewed, as a “new project” , looking at projections up to 2011 resulting in the proposal for an injection of capital funding of £8.5m to the college. Martin Morris referred Members to Appendix 1, which demonstrated that in order to reduce the college’s borrowing to 40% (which reflected the normal LSC guidelines) a grant of 79% would be required against the original amount of 50%.
- 4.4 Alison Clarke, Principal of Canterbury College, said that the capital project is part of the College’s vision for quality provision. The College had reviewed the implications of financing the project and had shared their concerns with the LSC, who have supported them in taking this forward.
- 4.6 *Discussion points:*
- (a). Canterbury College had been one of the first FE colleges to put a capital project forward and in retrospect it is clear that the 50% borrowing level is unsustainable
 - (b). The College also had a lower FTE funding rate than other colleges in Kent and Medway but this was being addressed for the 07/08 allocation as the LSC have put the College forward as a special case for additional funding.
 - ©. Vernon Hull asked if this decision would have any implications for other providers seeking capital funding. To date all capital projects were reviewed on their individual merits and the amount of capital support going towards a certain area had not been part of any decision process. In the future there would be a regional capital committee attached to the Regional Board.
 - (d). Malcolm Bell said that there was a capacity issue within the LSC structure to cope with the amount of capital projects regionally and this could also apply to some colleges.

Decision **It was agreed to support the proposal which would go before the National Capital Committee on 29 March 2007.**

Chris Hearn joined the meeting

Item 5 Approach to Safeguard Kent and Medway

- 5.1 Legislation was going through Parliament which would bring an end to local Councils. David Melville would feedback any points raised today at the Regional Board Awayday. Recruitment to the Regional Board would be underway in the near future and Members would be kept apprised of the situation. David Melville was currently on the Regional Board as the Chair of Kent & Medway LSC until the new membership of the Regional Board was established.
- 5.2 One of the issues to be discussed was how the Regional Board would link to the RDA and Skills Boards. John Parsonage said that both the Chairs of Regional Board and SEEDA had charged officers to comment on the following 4 issues:
- Capital investment into the region from various sources – leading regeneration through education.
 - Workforce Development
 - Looking at the demand side at local level
 - How would SEEDA Board work with Regional Board.
- 5.3 It was felt that the SE was such a large and diverse region that this would be a retrospective step for learners in Kent and Medway. It would be helpful if there was still some discretionary funding available to local offices to recognise and address the local needs. It was also felt that particular disadvantaged groups would be more at risk under a regional umbrella.
- 5.4 It was agreed that Members needed to be proactive when regional adverts are released for vacancies on the Regional Board and associated sub groups (i.e. Capital Sub Group). It was important to get the best business people of the right quality in positions where they can share their expertise and to ensure that our local voice is not lost..

Item 6 Annual Plan

- 6.1 Annual Plans would be published at the end of March and John Ratcliff updated Members on the Kent and Medway Plan which now included the points raised by Members at the last Council meeting.
- 6.2 His presentation detailed the process that had been applied to reach the final Plan which had included discussions at all levels., the inclusion of

comments made by Members and the local priorities identified under the regional priorities. These had been identified as Young People, Skills, Excellence and Communities. SEEDA had commented on all the SE Plans and had made favourable comments on local context, focus and actions. Additional points from SEEDA would be taken on board around the Olympics and Local Authorities. Ahmad Eslami had been key in drafting the Plan and Members recorded their thanks.

- 6.3 Comment was made about how little Construction was mentioned in the Plan, despite the regeneration programmes planned for Kent and Medway. It was suggested that Kent and Medway set itself apart by focusing on construction bearing in mind the benefits it will bring to the apprenticeship programme. Also, comment was made to the September Guarantee initiative not mentioned in the Plan. However, John Ratcliff confirmed that it was in the Plan and went under the umbrella of the Electronic Prospectus, which is currently out for tender. It was also felt that the Plan should also tie in with other plans such as the "Vision for Kent".
- 6.4 Anne Marie said that this was a clear and targeted Plan. It referred to how Kent and Medway had improved relative to other areas and she requested **some analysis on why we were better in these areas.**
- 6.5 Lesley Davies said that the next stage is for the drafting of the Implementation Plan and workshops were being held with Directors and key staff on different areas of work. Some roles and responsibilities within the teams lacked clarity and these would be reviewed along with the geographical areas and any revisions reported back to Members.

Decision The Local Plan was endorsed by Council.

7. AOB

- 7.1 The Chair drew Members' attention to the Area Director's Report. He also informed Members that a Capital Sub Group meeting to discuss the capital project for North West Kent College was required in early April as it was going before the National Capital Committee on 24 April. Dates would be circulated.