

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 14 September 2006
Subject Joint Extraordinary LSC Berkshire and LSC MKOB Council Meeting
Location Aylesbury College
Time 17:30
LSC office Berkshire
Publication intent Internal

Present Pat Upson
Kathryn Cook
David Ansell
Tony Eccleston
Anne Murdoch
Raymond Ball
Elizabeth Brighthouse
Jane Butcher
Norman Miles
David McGahey
Frances Parry
Andrew Peck
John Wilder
Jane Wainwright
Sally Dicketts
Bella Hewes

In attendance Claire Bassett
Sally Staples
Linda Saunders

LSC staff Sarah Rusby
Shereen Sameresinghe
Heather White
Pat Hadfield

Apologies Pam Alexander
Gordon Bull
Nicky Hillier
Jacqui Johnson
David Lunn
Gordon Marshall
Nick Parish
Leslie Stephen
Kathy Winrow
Ernest Reading
Jon Appleton
Laura Asquith
Ronnie Epstein
Katharine Horler
Jackie Parry

Item 1. Future Arrangements for Local Learning and Skills Councils

- 1.1 Pat Upson tabled a discussion paper (See Annex A). This set out ideas for enabling the two separate Councils to work more closely pending the outcome of the national exercise currently underway to streamline the LSC's accountability framework.
- 1.2 In summary, the paper proposed:
 - That the two Councils should meet on a quarterly basis, with meetings scheduled on the same day and sub-divided to include:
 - LSC Berkshire meeting
 - Joint Meeting
 - LSC MKOB meeting.
 - Council members would, in future, be designated as representing one of the five sub-areas (Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire East and Berkshire West) and meet as separate Working Groups if there was a specific sub-area issue to be discussed (e.g. failing FE College). They would also be invited to provide sub-area input to the Local Plan.
 - The sub-area groups would provide the mechanism for feeding in specific local issues to the Area Director.
 - Separate Working Groups might be established to oversee the local planning exercise, including reviewing the input from the sub-areas and ensuring that all local priorities are addressed.
- 1.3 The paper also put forward ideas for bringing the two existing Councils together over a period of time.
- 1.4 Given the length of time it was taking to resolve matters regarding the future of local Councils, members agreed that the proposals offered a pragmatic solution for moving forward until such time as guidance was issued from National Office. They did, however, reiterate concerns over the dilution of their role in the general shift towards regionalisation.
- 1.5 David Ansell empathised with the views expressed over the Councils' potential loss of influence. However, he believed that, in order to make effective decisions, the Regional Board would require strong local input.
- 1.6 There was overall support for the need to retain an emphasis on 'localness', particularly to ensure that the proposed sub-area groups would add value to the regional structure.
- 1.7 All agreed that the proposals outlined in Annex A should be adopted in the short term and reviewed at a later stage to assess how effective they have been in practice.
- 1.8 It was noted that a national announcement on the way forward was expected shortly and that this was likely to have implications on the agreement reached at today's meeting. Members recognised, however, that any changes resulting from the announcement would take time to implement and that their continued support throughout the transition phase would be crucial to both local offices' operations.

1.9 *{Post-meeting note: On the day following the meeting, the National Chairman wrote to all Council members outlining proposals for simplifying the existing non-executive structure – see Annex B attached.*

The changes proposed in his letter, if accepted by Ministers, will require changes to be made to the Learning and Skills Act 2000. In the meantime, Local Councils will remain in place.

In the light of discussions recorded at 1.1 – 1.8 above and the proposals put forward by the National Chairman, Council members will wish to discuss the matter further at the next meeting}.

Item 2. Thames Valley Structure Chart (Paper 24/2006)

2.1 The content of the latest organisation chart was noted by members. This reflected the vacancies remaining as the restructuring exercise draws to a close. The advertising and selection process is continuing with a view to all vacancies being filled early in the New Year.

Item 3. Framework for Excellence (Paper 25/2006)

3.1 The recently published Framework for Excellence consultation document sets out proposals for introducing a range of key performance indicators (KPIs) designed to assess the quality aspects of the post-16 learning and skills sector. It takes forward the reforms set out in the 2006 White Paper 'Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances'.

3.2 It is the first in a series of publications which seeks the views of the sector on the underlying principles of the framework and the timetable for implementation.

3.3 The following seven key performance indicators comprise the basis of the Framework:

- Responsiveness
 - Delivery against plan
 - Responsiveness to learners
 - Responsiveness to employers
- Effectiveness
 - Quality of outcomes
 - Quality of provision
- Finance
 - Financial health
 - Financial Control

3.4 A second consultation paper to be published in January 2007, will set out the definitions for each of the KPIs and criteria against which they will be judged. The final Framework will be published in June 2007 after consideration of all consultation responses.

3.5 A phased introduction of the Framework is proposed. The first phase will cover further education colleges, sixth form colleges and work based learning

providers; the second phase will cover all other providers, excluding school sixth forms – the latter is currently excluded from the arrangements.

- 3.6 The LSC, DfES and Ofsted will work together over the coming months to agree a single approach to the grading system ahead of implementing plans to publish providers' performance ratings and grades on an annual basis.
- 3.7 Council members noted developments and that the closing date for college and provider responses to the consultation document was 20th October.

Item 4. Regional Update

- 4.1 This item was postponed due to apologies being received from the nominated GOSE Observer.

Item 5. Date of Next Meeting

- 5.1 As recorded under item 1.2, the Chairman proposed that, for the immediate future, both Councils meet on the same day under similar arrangements to those planned for today.
- 5.2 Both Council Secretaries will liaise to draw up a timetable for four meetings over the next 12 months and circulate this for members to confirm availability.
Action: PH/MW
- 5.3 Consideration will be given to the request to identify a centrally located venue in the Thames Valley.

Item 6. Any Other Business

- 6.1 A request was made for further information on the role of the Economic Development Team; a report will be brought to the next meeting of the two Councils in response to this request.
Action: JG

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 18.15

Signed: (Chairman

Date:

Meeting chair	Pat Upson
Minute taker	Pat Hadfield
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