

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 7 February 2007
Subject Council Meeting - 40/070207
Location Eagle Point
Time 1000 - 1300
LSC office Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
Publication intent Public

Present Colonel Terry Scriven, Chair
Martin Lamb, Area Director
Professor Roger Brown
Christine Davis
Dr Graham Jowett
Ken Moon
Mike Petter
Kathy Slack (SEEDA)
Jill Wareham

In attendance Pam Charlwood, Connexions observer

LSC staff Anne-Marie Mountifield, Partnership Director
Phillip Walker, Partnership Director
Deryn Martin, Partnership Adviser

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Micheal Budd
Jonathan Cheshire
Garry George
Donna Green
Andrew Lloyd
Linda McGowan
Cathy Evans, GOSE observer
Jacky Stevns OBE, BusinessLink Wessex observer
Martin Pryor, JobCentre Plus observer
Rachel McKellar, Partnership Director
Peter Woods, Partnership Director

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

Welcome

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and wished all a happy new year.

Apologies

- 1.2 Apologies were noted from Michael Budd, Jonathan Cheshire, Garry George, Donna Green, Andrew Lloyd, Linda McGowan, Cathy Evans, Jacky Stevens, Martin Pryor, Rachel McKellar and Peter Woods.

Declaration of interests

- 1.3 Members were formally reminded to declare any interests, or conflict of interests as the need arose. They were also reminded that under the Council's standing orders Members with a conflict of interest could be requested to leave the room for the duration of the discussion.

Chair's update

- 1.4 The Chair verbally updated Members on his LSC activities since the last meeting. At a local level the work of the Fareham and St Vincent joint corporation group was progressing well and the Chair gave credit to the Executive for adding to the success of the meetings.
- 1.5 The Chair had been fortunate to attend the 101 Community Radio awards ceremony in Southampton. This had been organised in partnership with City College and acknowledged the contribution of local people in generating a unified community.
- 1.6 The Chair reminded Members of the forthcoming ministerial reception on 7 March and asked those who required overnight accommodation to contact the local office.
- 1.7 There was discussion about progress in the streamlining of non-executives and Members were informed that the FE Training Bill had now passed its first reading in the Lords and was through to the Commons. Members were informed that Roger Brown had written to Chris Banks prior to Christmas to articulate his reservations about the process and the poor example of policy making. A response had been received and Roger would circulate copies of the correspondence to any Member who wished to have sight of it.
- 1.8 Members expressed some concern about how local views would feed into regional decisions in the future and it was noted that the Regional Audit Committee had been discussing such issues in terms of risk management.
- 1.9 It was agreed that it was healthy to have such correspondence/discussion and the Chair thanked Members for their continuing commitment to learners in HLOW by ensuring that the transition to the new arrangements was as seamless as possible. It was noted that local Councils were likely to be in existence until the autumn dependent on the passage of the Bill and the speed with which the new Regional Board could be recruited to for statutory processes such as reorganisations.

Item 2. Minutes of last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting of 6 December 2006 were agreed as an accurate reflection of the discussion of that meeting and were cleared for publication.

Item 3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Action 36.3 – the FSB survey had been circulated to all Members. Ken Moon suggested that a presentation to Council might be appropriate and it was agreed to schedule this for later in the year.

Action: 40.1 Chair

- 3.2 Action 38.4 – the LSC was working with JCP on the transfer of some of its responsibilities and was working locally to ensure that activities did not fall through the cracks.
- 3.3 Action 38.6 - it would be known which recommendations by Lord Leitch had been accepted or deferred by April and this would usefully feed into the council discussion on skills at that meeting.
- 3.4 Action 39.2 – it was noted that Connexions would have usable NEET plans in late April/May and agreed to link this in with an appropriate StAG meeting.

Action: 40.2 Executive

- 3.5 All remaining actions had been completed
- 3.6 The Chair drew Members' attention to the schedule of Council, local capital committee and StAG dates for 2007 and requested that all dates remain in Members' diaries until further notice.

Item 4. Area Director's Report

- 4.1 Members reviewed the report on key performance developments since the last Council meeting in December 2006 and drew Members' attention to the highlights from the performance scorecard. In particular Members were pleased to note the sound start made towards the apprenticeship completion target and the improvement over the previous year on E2E progression rates. There was discussion about the challenging forecast to double the number of apprenticeships over the next four years.
- 4.2 Members discussed the progress of Apprenticeships on-line and noted that this was showing some benefit. There was some discussion on the future discretionary funding of this project and the need to raise awareness of its value with the Local Authorities. The Executive believed that the project should be made a regional facility and funded appropriately across the region. It was noted that this project was being used as an example of success in a forthcoming presentation to Mark Haysom and agreed that this issue would also be taken up through the regional board.

Action: 40.3 Chair/Executive

- 4.3 Members noted the FE success rates which remained, jointly with Surrey, the highest in the SE region and there was discussion about Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP). Members noted that there were no FE colleges in

HIOW that fell below the MLP in terms of overall provision but that 15-20% of WBL provision would not be recontracted in 07/08.

Leitch Review of Skills

- 4.4 Members noted the update that outlined the key recommendations, the LSC's response and next steps. In response to a key recommendation Members were informed that the South East would be piloting adult learner accounts and there was discussion on the challenges of this and Train to Gain.
- 4.5 Members commented on the Chancellor's commitment to raise the compulsory participation age to 18 and the need to think through the implications of this at some point. It was suggested that school was part of the problem for many young people and that it would therefore be more relevant to talk about continuing learning and training in appropriate settings rather than focussing on school.
- 4.6 The regional audit committee had noted the substantial underspend on Train to Gain and Members asked how big an issue this was for HIOW. Members were informed that there had been a slower start than expected and that the Executive was currently working with DfES on the possibility of carrying forward funding to the next financial year. Members involved in the initiative through their own institutions noted that they were finding Train to Gain enormously challenging.

Item 5. Strategic Advisory Group Report

- 5.1 Members noted the draft minutes of the StAG meeting of 23 January 2007 that had been circulated in advance of the meeting and which reflected discussion held at that meeting.
- 5.2 The Chair highlighted the main points of the meeting and drew Members' attention to the group's interest in working relationships between the Executive and Local Authorities in HIOW and the need to keep this under review.
- 5.3 Members noted that there was one outstanding complaint and felt that this was a positive indicator of the level of satisfaction with the provider network in HIOW.
- 5.4 Members' attention was drawn to the timescale of the annual plan process and it was noted that this would be further discussed in item 6 of the agenda.
- 5.5 StAG had been pleased with the progress in Fareham and Gosport and in terms of developments on the Isle of Wight had requested that Council be given the opportunity to consider any response given to the Policy Commission. Members' attention was drawn to the deterioration of raw exam results on the Island and the "poor" value added score on the ALPs scale.

Partnership Updates

Fareham and Gosport

- 5.6 This area was now seeing significant signs of progress in terms of the joint corporation working group and the new Principal at St Vincent was rising to the challenge. A project manager, who was an experienced practitioner, had

been appointed to take forward the merger and support the capacity of both colleges and the LSC. The two colleges had gone out to tender for property consultants to develop the feasibility study and options for the new college and candidates would be interviewed at the end of February. The LSC had been invited to sit on the interview panel as observers. StAG had raised viability concerns for the new college and it was explained that these stemmed from the relative financial health of the two existing institutions, not the critical mass of the area. The LSC did not want to import the financial problems of the existing organisations into the new college and was working to ensure that both colleges went into the merger financially fit. Members accepted that the key to the success of the new college would be for it to be a genuinely new organisation with a clear and realistic vision.

- 5.7 There was some discussion about the potential implications of Itchen college relocating further eastwards and Members were informed that the feasibility study for Itchen would be running concurrently with Fareham and Gosport and would look at the impact on existing providers within its educational rationale. Members were reminded that the feasibility study for Itchen would look at a number of options, only one of which was the possibility of relocating closer to Fareham.
- 5.8 There was discussion about the examination in public of the SE Plan at which the proposals for the two HIOW strategic development areas had been heard. Of particular relevance to Fareham and Gosport was the proposal to build an additional 10,000 homes north of Fareham and it was noted that decisions would not be made until March. SEEDA noted that many questions had been raised regarding skills development. It was recognised that this was a key issue for the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and noted that the LSC chaired the skills element of the PUSH agenda thus ensuring alignment.
- 5.9 It was noted that two Council Members still sat as observers on the corporation of Fareham college and there was some discussion of the continued value of this role. It was agreed that it was crucial to sustain this engagement.

Isle of Wight

- 5.10 Jill Wareham declared an interest as clerk to the governors of Sandown High School and was permitted to make general comments.
- 5.11 The Executive had attended the public cabinet meeting on 6 February at which the LSC's proposal had been officially rejected. The IOW council had however publicly acknowledged the need for change and intended to go to consultation on its own proposals. The Executive believed that the LA would move towards a pattern of schooling under an overarching trust, competitively tendered for, for three to four new 14-19 schools on the Island with the college delivering additional 16-19 provision and some 14-19 provision. This would be done in collaboration with the LSC.
- 5.12 There was some discussion about the incentives for competing to run the trust and about whether the local Council was content to accept that this was the best that could be done for the learners on the Island. Picking up on

StAG's request (minute 5.5) it was noted that the draft response to the consultation would come to the March StAG in advance of the April Council and would thus be a formal LSC Council response.

Action: 40.4 Executive

5.13 Members questioned whether the LA's proposal would improve school results and it was noted that there was a need to clarify whether the LA intended to consult on all three of its options or whether it would narrow this down to a preferred choice. There was some discussion on the proposed timescale of the consultation and it was noted that this also required clarification.

Action: 40.5 Executive

5.14 There was some discussion about the criticisms from the JAR on the Island in terms of slow progress and Members asked whether there was any indication from key links at DfES as to their view of the situation. Members were informed that the situation was being monitored by GOSE and that locally there was some confidence in the new Director of Children's Services.

5.15 Members remained to be convinced that the LA's proposals were in the best interests of the learner.

Andover

5.16 The merger between Sparsholt and Cricklade colleges was now in the period of statutory consultation and all Members had received a copy of this. All was proceeding to timescale however, Members were informed that Cricklade was to receive an Ofsted inspection in March.

5.17 Members requested an update on any structural movements on HIOW borders and were informed of developments at both Salisbury and Farnham colleges, both of which concerned some HIOW colleges.

Item 6. Annual Planning – draft annual plan 2007/08

6.1 Members accepted the Executive's apologies for tabling the paper which had been due to the delay in receipt of the Regional Commissioning Plan and local template. It was noted that in this transition year there was still a requirement for local Councils to have local plans, but that this was driven by the region and the Regional Commissioning Plan declared what provision the LSC would want to commission across all funding lines.

6.2 Picking up on a point raised at StAG Members noted that the local plan would capture where HIOW was in relation to its objectives from 06/07 and those actions that would be taken forward into the 07/08 year.

6.3 Members' attention was drawn to the challenging timetable where development activities were happening concurrently rather than consecutively. It was noted that there was a requirement for local plans to be reviewed by the regional board on 12 March and that there was therefore a tension with locally scheduled meeting dates.

6.4 Members' attention was drawn to the four regional priorities and to the commissioning volumes and outcomes tables for both young people and adults. It was noted that the same table would be required at a local level

and that all providers would be required to complete it so that the numbers could be aggregated.

- 6.5 Members' attention was drawn to the first draft annual plan, its four key areas and the outstanding issues and challenges that would inform the action plan for 07/08.
- 6.6 In terms of young people it was noted that NEETs would be a particular priority as although there had been an improvement over the previous year there were still significant variations around HIOW.
- 6.7 In terms of skills Members' attention was drawn to the significant proportion of adults of working age with essential skills needs and few or no qualifications.
- 6.8 In terms of excellence Members were informed that although HIOW was strong in terms of the performance of the provider network, it was necessary to raise the bar in terms of quality of estate and thus capital investment would feature heavily. It was noted that minimum levels of performance would also be reflected in this section.
- 6.9 In terms of communities Members noted that skills regeneration would be an issue for this section.
- 6.10 Members' attention was drawn to the capital statement that would form an annex to the local plan and it was noted that this would also include an investment statement. Members were informed that the statement would need to be refreshed in the light of the recent policy directive for greener buildings and sustainability.
- 6.11 Members felt that given that the PSA targets were due in 2010 it would be helpful for the local summary to concentrate on what the local LSC would do between 2007-2010. There was some concern in relation to the capital plan as it was felt there was a need for a strategic overview of proposals around the county and it was noted that some of this would come through in the investment statement. Members were informed that the local capital plan and investment statement would form part of the SE regional plan and that all schemes going forward would have to be contained within this (other than essential health & safety maintenance), however guidance was still awaited on this.
- 6.12 In terms of process Members were informed that the final draft would be circulated to all Members for comment prior to submission to the regional board on 12 March and that full details and deadlines would be contained within a covering email.

Action: 40.6 Executive

Item 7. Any other business

Naval Base Review

- 7.1 SEEDA updated Members on the proposed closure of Portsmouth Dockyard under the current naval base review and there was discussion on the significant economic implications of this for the area. It was noted that SEEDA was working closely with the Navy, GOSE and other partners, had

commissioned a research report in this area and would shortly be presenting its case to Downing Street. A stakeholder group, chaired by Sarah McCarthy-Fry, MP, had been established. The review would put forward its recommendations to Ministers at the end of March/early April with decisions expected in June/July. It was agreed that SEEDA would keep Members informed of developments and would provide an update at the next meeting.

Action: 40.7 SEEDA

SEEDA review of partnerships

- 7.2 Members were informed that SEEDA had commissioned a review of all sub-regional economic partnerships, AIFs and local skills for productivity alliances. Consultants had yet to be appointed. There would be sub-regional meetings in relation to this review and SEEDA recommended LSC engagement in this area.

Item 8. Date of next meeting

- 8.1 The next Council meeting will take place on Thursday 19 April 2007, 0915 – 1300 at Eagle Point.

Note: copies of all papers and reports relating to each item and presented to Council are not circulated with the minutes but are held on file.

Signed:

Colonel Terry Scriven, Chair

Date:

Publication no.

Meeting chair

Colonel Terry Scriven

Minute taker

Deryn Martin

Date created

7 February 2007

Document ref.

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