

# Minutes



Leading learning and skills

**Date** 18th January 2008  
**Subject** South West Regional Board  
**Location** Dillington House  
**Time** 12.30  
**LSC office** South West Region  
**Publication intent** Internal

**Present** Richard Dimpleby (Acting Chair)  
Jane Barrie OBE  
Malcolm Gillespie  
Brian Kemp  
Bryan McGinity  
Catherine Christie  
Paul Lucken  
Marinos Paphitis  
Trish Taylor  
Mike Davies

**Apologies** John Savage CBE (Chair)  
Professor John Bull CBE  
Malcolm Trobe  
John Chudley  
Denis Miles  
Mark Harvey  
John Temple

## **Item 1. Welcome and introductions**

**1.1** Richard Dimpleby welcomed everyone to the meeting including Sally House Partnership Director for Somerset and John Peart Partnership Manager in Devon and Cornwall LSC.

## **Item 2. Declarations of Interest**

**2.1** The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to declare any interest relevant to the agenda. In relation to the capital bid from Huish Espicopi School, Jane Barrie declared that she is Chair of Governors of Taunton School and Richard Dimpleby reported that he had previously been the Principal of Strode College.

### **Item 3. Minutes of last meeting**

- 3.1 Bryan McGinity referred to a typographic error in paragraph 8.10. The minutes of the meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2007 were then agreed as a true record.

### **Item 4. Matters arising**

- 4.1 With reference to paragraph 4.1 the Chair said that Denis Miles had reported that the information about procurement cards had been requested from the Regional Director of the AoC but a reply had not yet received. Denis Miles update went on to say that Colleges have guidance of this good practice but it is not mandatory. Phil Head, Director of Infrastructure and Property Services is responsible for encouraging best practice procurement across the FE sector. In addition the Colleges have their own governance processes including external auditing. The LSC receives copies of the Management letters and therefore at this point in time there is no known significant concern with this issue.
- 4.2 With reference to Item 6, Malcolm Gillespie reported that the National Capital Committee had approved the North Devon capital bid at their meeting earlier in the day but that it would still need to go to the National Council.

### **Item 5. Machinery of Government changes**

- 5.1 It was agreed that Malcolm Gillespie would give an update under Item 9.

### **Item 6. Merger of North Devon and East Devon colleges proposal**

- 6.1 John Peart Partnership Manager from Devon and Cornwall, referred to the papers that had been sent out and gave a presentation summarising the key features of the proposal.
- 6.2 Bryan McGinity referred to the merger proposal prepared by the Colleges and asked for clarity about the reference to the autonomy of East Devon College. John Peart said that this was misleading wording and that there would be one Principal with the current East Devon Principal in charge of the Tiverton campus but not as a Principal. The new corporation would have one Board of Governors. **The Chair said it was important the concerns of the Board on this ambiguous wording were recorded and that there should be no doubts that there can be only one Accounting Officer and one Board of Governors, and that this should be reflected in the public consultation and in future documentation relating to the merger proposal.**
- 6.3 Jane Barrie highlighted the reference to the Tiverton site being misleadingly called a College and stressed that the governance arrangements need to be clearly defined. Richard Dimpleby referred to the use of the term of a shared vision and said that the corporation can only have a single strategy.
- 6.4 Bryan McGinity referred to the merger proposal prepared by the Colleges and asked about the capacity of North Devon College to manage the project, in addition to the recently approved large capital project for North Devon. John Peart said that the Principal of North Devon had recognised the need

for dedicated management resource for the project. **The Chair said it was important that it was recorded that the Board had stressed that there should be sufficiently qualified project management in place for the merger to take place .**

- 6.5** Brian Kemp said that there were risks with mergers which involved a College that was struggling and asked about the funding differentials mentioned on page 41 of the document. John Peart said that due to the funding changes for 2008/09, the differentials would be less and therefore more manageable.
- 6.6** The Chair asked if there was a source of good practice for managing learning delivery in rural areas. Catherine Christie said that there is a review of delivering Diplomas being conducted by DCSF and agreed that this is a relevant and important issue to this merger proposal. Catherine Christie also said that there should be a commitment to address the challenge to reduce the number of young people in Devon who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in the final submission.
- 6.7** Brian Kemp said that the detailed proposal will need to address the possibility of a transport subsidy for learners.
- 6.8** Jane Barrie asked if the Chair of East Devon College will be resigning. John Peart said that as the corporation of East Devon College would be dissolved as part of the merger, this would, in effect, obviate the need for resignation.
- 6.9 The South West Regional Board approved the Initial Outline Proposal for the merger between East Devon College and North Devon College subject to the following key issues being satisfactorily addressed and presented in the final merger proposal submission –**
- **Satisfactory arrangements to manage the pay differentials between the Colleges**
  - **Clarity of governance structure and arrangements for the new corporation, with clear reference to the formation of a single corporation in all communications**
  - **Setting out the impact of the merger on the need to reduce young people who are NEET in Devon**
  - **Satisfactory transport arrangements for learners**
  - **Appropriate provision for land based learning demands**
  - **Demonstration of management capacity to manage the implementation of the merger during the same time period of the North Devon College capital project**

#### **Item 7. Capital applications (16 to 19)**

- 7.1** Marinos Paphitis gave an overview of the three proposals from Gloucestershire; Chosen Hill School, Launchpad Consortium and Balcarras School by explaining that these are part of a strategic portfolio of 6<sup>th</sup> form provision in the county. Brian Kemp added that they had also been considered by the Area Partnerships which includes the Further Education Colleges.

- 7.2 Bryan McGinity asked about any legal issues to do with ownership in respect of Chosen Hill School. Marinos Paphitis confirmed that as a school 6<sup>th</sup> form it remains part of the Local Authority. Jane Barrie asked about the governance arrangements for the Launchpad provision as it is formed as part of a partnership. Marinos Paphitis said there would be a Board made up from the schools and the College with a local manager to run the site.
- 7.3 Trish Taylor presented the background of the proposal from Gillingham School and tabled an amended paper, confirming the support of the North Dorset Consortium and the Local Authority.
- 7.4 Catherine Christie explained that the funding allocations for 2008/09 will need to be distributed across all 6<sup>th</sup> forms in the region so there were no guarantees of the final amount of revenue allocations.
- 7.5 The Regional Board unanimously approved the capital proposals for Chosen Hill School, Launchpad Consortium, Balcarras School and Gillingham School.**
- 7.6 For the proposal from Huish Episcopi School, the meeting was joined by Graham Roff their head teacher, deputy head teacher Sarah Watson and Chair of Governors David Bell.
- 7.7 The Chair welcomed the visitors and each person introduced themselves to the visitors. Richard Dimpleby went on to explain that the role of the Board was to make a decision on the capital element of the bid and at the same time seek clarity on any educational aspects. The Chair then invited the visitors to highlight any points in the proposal before the item was opened for questions.
- 7.8 Graham Roff summarised the background of the proposal explaining that it was submitted as part of the Presumption procedures. He said that a key factor was the long standing desire by the school and the community to provide more choice (16 to 19) in the area that was in addition to the Further Education options nearby. Graham Roff made reference to the changing nature of the curriculum, alterations to the school leaving age and the support of parents and the community. He explained how he believed the learner numbers could be achieved adding that the building would also be used by the local community.
- 7.9 Jane Barrie congratulated the head teacher on their school performance and asked about the collaboration model. Sarah Watson explained how they had consulted with the Further Education Colleges in the area, including SCAT and Yeovil on specific curriculum topics.
- 7.10 Jane Barrie asked about the impact of the collaboration on travel to learn figures. Sarah Watson said that this was being considered by the South Somerset Consortium in conjunction with the transport department of the County Council. The current bus arrangements could be extended to other institutions and there were discussions about the possibility of reducing the current constraints of the student registration rules. Yeovil College were also restructuring their timetables to better facilitate collaborative learning.

- 7.11** David Bell re-emphasised the arguments for increased choice and added that the project would be good for the environment by reducing the dependency on car travel.
- 7.12** Brian Kemp asked what the attraction would be to other collaborating providers. Graham Roff explained that students would gain from a multi-functioning hall and that it would enable relationships with local businesses to be strengthened.
- 7.13** Brian Kemp asked how the new facility would serve the local community. Graham Roff explained that the new building will be more comfortable and overcome current problems with heating. In addition it would attract the use of its new business studies suite and support the development of rural skills in the area.
- 7.14** Richard Dimpleby commented on the ambitious range of subjects and the intention to deliver the International Baccalaureate. Graham Roff said that the A level courses have been carefully selected following consultation and that the International Baccalaureate was for the future.
- 7.15** Richard Dimpleby thanked the visitors who then left the meeting. The Board discussed the proposal and the School's intentions. The Board agreed a qualified approval of the proposal due to a number of issues and subject to the proposal being considered by the Somerset School Organisation Advisory Panel on 2 March and subsequently by Somerset County Council Executive Board on 26 March.
- 7.16** The first issue related to the post-16 curriculum offer and the degree to which the proposal is for a stand alone sixth form with delivery on the school site. The Board felt it was not yet clear what specific arrangements regarding post-16 joint delivery are in place to achieve part-time links to other colleges for post-16 students.
- 7.17** The second point concerned the proposed numbers. The Board felt that much more account needed to be taken of all the factors that would influence young people and their parents when the time comes to make a decision on the appropriate post-16 provider. If the proposed numbers are set too high, the impact on the anticipated revenue would be substantial and the proposed capital building too big.
- 7.18** The Chair agreed to write to Huish Episcopi School setting out these points in more detail and proposing that the school should discuss these issues jointly with the LSC and the Local Authority.

#### **Item 8. Additional Board Member nominations**

- 8.1** Malcolm Gillespie explained that he had met with John Savage to discuss the names that had been put forward and read out the nominations. Malcolm Gillespie explained that the list needed to be finalised when John Savage returned from his holiday and that the submission may contain the names of some observers in order to provide the necessary breadth of expertise.

### **Item 9. Regional Directors report**

- 9.1** Malcolm Gillespie said that this is a verbal report as the gap since the last one is so short.
- 9.2** The recruitment of a Regional Council will likely begin in the Spring with appointments made by the Autumn. There may be additional delegations from the National Council.
- 9.3** The regional performance report and commissioning plan will be presented to the Chief Executive on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February and will be copied to members at the March meeting.
- 9.4** The despatch of the Machinery of Government changes consultation letter by the two Secretaries of State has been delayed until the end of February.

### **Item 10. Any other Business**

- 10.1** Jane Barrie commented that some Audit Committee members were uncomfortable about the lack of connection with local issues and therefore their ability to sign off assurance statements with confidence. Jane Barrie also referred to the Audit Committee report and said she was expecting more of a statement of assurance rather than an account of activities. Malcolm Gillespie said that this may improve with the appointment of the additional Board members.

### **Item 11. The next meeting of the Board**

- 11.1** The next meeting will take place on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2008 starting with lunch at 12.30pm. The agenda is likely to include the Regional Commissioning Plan, capital bids from Star College, Bournemouth & Poole College, Norton Radstock College and Weston College.

**Meeting chair**                      Richard Dimbleby  
**Minute taker**                      Mike Davies