

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date	5 th September 2008
Subject	South West Regional Board
Location	Dillington House
Time	1.30pm
LSC office	South West Region
Publication intent	Internal

Present	John Savage CBE (Chair) Shirley Arayan Jane Barrie OBE Simon Curtis Malcolm Gillespie Chris Hyde Brian Kemp Jackie Longworth MBE Bryan McGinity Tim Moore Catherine Christie John Chudley Paul Lucken Denis Miles Trish Taylor Mike Davies Mark Harvey
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Apologies	David Brech Professor John Bull CBE John Crownshaw Richard Dimpleby Malcolm Trobe
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Item 1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including Jan Downie who attended to brief Members on the 16 to 19 capital proposals.

- 1.2 The Chair confirmed apologies had been received from the following Members; John Bull, Richard Dimbleby, David Brech, John Crownshaw and Malcolm Trobe.

Item 2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to declare any interest relevant to the agenda. None were reported.

Item 3. Minutes of last meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

Item 4. Matters arising

- 4.1 Jackie Longworth said that in relation to capital proposal applications, colleges tend to answer the equality of opportunity questions in terms of students with disability and/or learning difficulty, with no reference to the college's duties to promote equal opportunities in respect of gender and race. Jackie Longworth said this might be because of the wording of the questions in the education assessment form, particularly question 5c. As this is a national form Jackie Longworth suggested that some regional guidance to colleges could be added. It was agreed that Jackie Longworth would provide suggested alternative wording which would be passed on to National Office colleagues for consideration.
- 4.2 John Chudley confirmed that consent had been given to the capital proposal from City of Bristol College by the national Capital Committee and this would now go forward to the National Council.

Item 5. Launchpad Capital proposal ratification

- 5.1 Mike Davies referred to the amendment to the Launchpad 16-19 capital funding proposal that members voted upon by email in July. This was done electronically because of deadlines associated with the commitment of funds. Members were reminded that they had received a revised paper for their consideration.
- 5.2 The Chair asked members to ratify the decision so that it could be formally recorded in the minutes. **The Regional Board unanimously ratified the change in the Launchpad 16-19 capital funding proposal previously decided at the Regional Board meeting of the 11th June 2008 so that the lead organisation as the recipient of the funding should be Gloucester College of Arts and Technology.**

Item 6. Capital proposal (in detail) – Truro/Penwith

- 6.1 John Chudley presented the background to the Truro and Penwith College proposal in relation to the development of its Penwith campus at Penzance and said that it fulfilled all of the LSC criteria. In addition John Chudley confirmed that the Regional Development Agency had given its support for the project.

- 6.2** Brian Kemp asked what assurance the LSC could give that the growth in learner numbers would be funded. John Chudley said that the LSC had verified the projected numbers which will become part of the funding baseline used in next year's allocation process.
- 6.3** Jackie Longworth referred to the learner growth figures quoted on page 4 of the proposal document and said that the narrative did not support these figures. John Chudley confirmed that he was confident in the numbers and said they were based mainly on Penwith learners and did not rely on a transfer of Truro students who currently travelled from Penzance to the Truro campus. In addition there would be an increase in opportunities that will develop in Penwith as a result of the College re-establishing itself.
- 6.4** Chris Hyde said that the links to business and the community were not clearly described. John Chudley agreed that the narrative was not as clear as it should be but the announcement of the College merger had significantly boosted interest from these groups.
- 6.5** John Savage referred to the presentation from the College Principal to the Regional Board earlier in the year and said this was a necessary and exciting project.
- 6.6** **The Regional Board unanimously agreed to endorse the 'in detail' capital proposal from Truro/Penwith College at a gross cost of £25,076,000 with a capital grant from the LSC of £12,538,000 (50%) in accordance with the merger application signed off by the Secretary of State for consideration by the National Capital Committee.**

Item 7. Somerset College of Art & Technology capital proposal

- 7.1** The Chair said that the proposal was not ready for consideration yet so this item had been postponed to a future meeting.

Item 8. 16 to 19 Capital proposals

- 8.1** Jan Downie summarised the background to the proposal from Hardenhuish School and Mark Harvey confirmed that the application met the LSC's property criteria.
- 8.2** Brian Kemp expressed concern about the projected growth in learner numbers which is against the current trend and could also be affected if the economic climate impacts on the planned new housing. Jan Downie said that the LSC had scrutinised the growth ambitions and a Local Authority review of the Chippenham area also supported the projections. Jan Downie said that North Wiltshire population is growing against the trend and this is an affluent area so the effect of the economic downturn on the house building is likely to be less than it might be elsewhere. In addition at 6th form level the school attracts applicants from further afield because of its reputation.
- 8.3** Shirley Arayan asked who will offer provision for the new diplomas. Jan Downie said that Wiltshire was not as advanced as other areas and the school and the College will need to plan for this.
- 8.4** Jackie Longworth emphasised the need for a strategy for diplomas to prevent a division between academic and vocational. Malcolm Gillespie said that the

LSC would help facilitate rather than define the strategy through local partnerships and this work has already begun.

- 8.5** Simon Curtis asked about the impact on existing learners during the building work. Mark Harvey confirmed that temporary accommodation had been arranged.
- 8.6 Members then voted unanimously to approve the request from Hardenhuish School for a capital grant contribution of £3,422,782 which represents 96% of the total building costs.**
- 8.7** Jan Downie summarised the background to the proposal from Bishop Wordsworth School including the rationale for the projected growth in learner numbers and the need for good quality 'A' level provision.
- 8.8** Jane Barrie asked about equality of access as Bishop Wordsworth is a boys school and whether the local girls school provide the National Baccalaureate as well. Jan Downie said the LSC is already working with the schools on this issue.
- 8.9 Members then voted unanimously to approve the request from Bishop Wordsworth School for a capital grant contribution of £2,038,419 which represents 90% of the total building costs.**

Item 9. South West LSC performance report

- 9.1** Malcolm Gillespie explained that this was the presentation used at the review with the Chief Executive in July and said that overall the review had been very positive.
- 9.2** Malcolm Gillespie summarised TtG (Train to Gain) performance and Paul Lucken described progress and trends. Bryan McGinity asked if the LSC had informed employers of the new TtG eligibility flexibilities. Paul Lucken confirmed that this was being done this week. Tim Moore asked if a copy of the changes could be made available.
- ACTION: Paul Lucken to provide a copy of the flexibility changes for Train to Gain.**
- 9.3** Simon Curtis asked if there was a risk of the changes resulting in too many places that do not qualify to be counted towards the targets. Malcolm Gillespie agreed this could happen but said it is worth opening up the access and then managing the risks as they emerge.
- 9.4** Jackie Longworth asked about support for learners in work places where there was no TU (Trade Union) learning representative. Paul Lucken said that the LSC has offered to sponsor TU learning representatives and was also encouraging the use of key workers for this role. The LSC were also aiming the marketing of learning at the employer more than the employee. Jackie Longworth said that the TtG performance in the South West seems to be very good in respect of employer engagement but more needs to be done to engage employees in the learning and skills agenda and suggested there may be good practice within union organised workplaces that could be tapped into.
- 9.5** With regard to Apprenticeships Jackie Longworth commented that the availability of good performance data will help understand the impact on

disadvantaged groups. Chris Hyde asked about the effect of the economic decline on the take up. Malcolm Gillespie said that it may mean that more learners are trained pending a definite placement. John Savage said it was important not to panic over the recession and Brian Kemp said that in times of economic downturn there is more onus on the public sector employers to provide apprenticeship opportunities.

- 9.6** Malcolm Gillespie completed the presentation by covering the September Guarantee, the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) target, LSC infrastructure, risk management and financial management. The Chair congratulated Malcolm Gillespie on the performance and achievements.

Item 10. Regional Director's report

- 10.1** Malcolm Gillespie said that the LSC was still awaiting important decisions from DIUS and DCSF on the Machinery of Government and then invited comment and questions on the rest of his report.
- 10.2** Brian Kemp asked whether people covering the work of managers leaving the organisation are being promoted to reflect the additional responsibility as well as giving them credibility they need to have with external partners. Trish Taylor said that this is being done but it has to follow the LSC recruitment process.
- 10.3** Bryan McGinity expressed his concern that DIUS is proposing to stop the availability of Exceptional Funding support for Colleges. Denis Miles confirmed that the debate with DIUS on this issue was continuing and he felt that DIUS would eventually recognise that it would have no option but to agree to exceptional support funding to avoid college insolvency and to ensure that learners were not disadvantaged whilst a college was in recovery.
- 10.4** Jackie Longworth asked about the implications of the EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) information technology problems. Malcolm Gillespie said that the LSC is putting pressure on the contractors to rectify the situation but he has given his assurance that applicants will be paid.
- 10.5** Jackie Longworth expressed concern that the information advice and guidance will be only given to groups rather than individuals. Paul Lucken said that it could be either depending on the subject area.

Item 11. Any other business

- 11.1** Jackie Longworth said that the RDA will no longer be funding Learning Works for All project resulting in Union Learn workers being made redundant. Malcolm Gillespie said that he had received a letter from TUC regional secretary Nigel Costley on the subject and will meet him soon to discuss it.
- 11.2** Jackie Longworth said that an Equality South West event on employment and skills had generated some positive suggestions on how the Regional Skills Partnership and the LSC could work together to broaden skills across the region.

11.3 As this was the last meeting of the Regional Board the Chair then referred to the past work and contributions of members towards the work of the LSC and thanked everyone for what they had done.

Item 12. The next meeting of the new Regional Council

12.1 The first meeting of the new Regional Council will take place on Thursday 25th September 2008.

Meeting chair	John Savage
Minute taker	Mike Davies