

Minutes



Leading learning and skills

Date 23 May 2006
Subject Council Meeting
Location Conference Room 1 and 2
Time 10:30 - 13:00
LSC office Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole
Publication intent Public

Present Richard Dimpleby Prof Stuart Bartholomew
Simon Curtis Kelvyn Derrick
Adrian Humphries Denise Price
Chris Shepperd Valerie Stevens
Trish Taylor

In attendance Tim Render Rob Sly
Andrew Williams

LSC staff Paul Pettigrew

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Steve Attwill Jonathan Morris
Gordon Page Simon West

Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Richard welcomed Kelvyn Derrick to his first meeting as the RDA Representative. He confirmed that John Savage has been appointed as the Chair of the Regional Board and that he has been appointed as Chair of BDP local Council. Both appointments are for one year due to the current review of Council arrangements. Richard also advised Council that Jane Raimes has stood down.

Item 2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 29 November 2005 were approved.

Item 3. Matters arising

3.1 There were no matters arising from the meeting held on 29 November 2005.

Item 4. Co-Financing Progress

4.1 Alan Cox provided an update on achievements relating to the European Social Fund. He explained that the fund is spent in three principal areas;

participation; adding value to main stream funding for young people and skills development. Alan's associated paper sets out in more detail how the fund has been used to support these areas.

- 4.2 The local office has embraced the fund and been proactive in applying for it resulting in £8.5 million being tendered since October 2002. Co-financing arrangements have benefited providers placing a large proportion of the bureaucracy associated with the funding on the LSC.
- 4.3 Alan made reference to the future of the European Social Fund anticipating that the new programme will be a reduced budget fully co-financed through two organisations, Job Centre Plus and the LSC. He pointed out that due to delays; the current fund has been extended to 2008.
- 4.4 Andrew gave his own example of how ESF funding has enabled Connexions to have dedicated personal advisers with bursaries to support those not in education, employment or training. ESF funding has supported local projects that are flexible enabling them to make a real impact.

Item 5. Gypsy and Traveller Education and Training Presentation

- 5.1 Ken thanked the Council for giving him the opportunity to talk about the European Social Funded Gypsy and Traveller project.
- 5.2 He explained the barriers faced by this group of people. He went on to demonstrate how learning has to be delivered in a very different and flexible way to enable them to take part. The Council commented that they were struck by the extent of the changes in the learning delivery style needed to engage with this group of the community.
- 5.3 Ken said that the project has taken off with the community and he has seen people moving into the area to take advantage of the project.
- 5.4 Paul asked Ken what was being put in place to sustain the project after the funding ceases. Ken responded by saying that it will be difficult but that he hoped that as tutor training is part of this project they will be able to continue working with the group. Richard Dimpleby suggested that the Community Foundation may be able to offer some support.
- 5.5 Kelvyn asked whether there was a concern shared in the community about the image that is often portrayed. Ken responded by saying that in any society there are those who follow the rules and those who don't. The project tries to stand away from issues such as housing and accommodation otherwise these issues would take over from the learning aspects.
- 5.6 Ken asked the Council to consider whether there was any benefit in gaining some PR for the project.

Item 6. Feedback from National Chairs Day

- 6.1 Richard provided feedback from the National Chairs Day circulating a copy of Chris Banks' e-mail and a copy of a chart produced by Brian McGinty. The chart is only the jottings from an early discussion intended to promote further discussion amongst local Councils.

- 6.2 At the Chairs Day it was clear that different regions have different ideas about the sort of model they would wish to adopt and Chris Banks had therefore agreed to circulate some parameters to ensure consistency.
- 6.3 Richard said that he had been surprised to hear that the LSC's new streamlined accounting structure had only resulted in a handful of mergers between offices. Adrian said that he too was surprised and pointed out that Council had supported the merger with Somerset as they had been led to believe that this made economic sense on the basis it was the plan nationwide. Tim said that as an observer on the Somerset Council, he felt that Somerset was below the critical mass needed to be a viable organisation. The Council agreed that they were still happy with the arrangement but Adrian thought that the point should be made.
- 6.4 Richard pointed out that with the delegated authority they now have, Regional Boards need to be focusing on their statutory duty and in responding to what local Councils are saying. The SW Chairs felt that although they are keen to keep the Regional Board small it would benefit from additional representatives from the RDA, GOSW and JobCentrePlus.
- 6.5 In setting the context for the discussion on the future of the local Council, Trish said that £750 million of funding comes into the South West Region with the vast majority of this being spent on main stream programme funding and only 10% of the funding used for administration and discretionary purposes. She thinks that the local Council's role is about using three year development plans to respond to local needs, ensuring the growth of the provider market and in managing less than satisfactory standards.
- 6.6 Richard said that the new local body will have 'persuasive authority' and Trish said that she was very keen to keep the local independence Council brings to the LSC. Her voice is greatly strengthened by the will of the local people.
- 6.7 Several Council Members referred to the Brian McGinity diagram asking for the arrows to be amended to show movement in both directions. Nobody was keen on the term 'local skills advisory group' and Richard agreed that the title should include learning and skills and that the use of the word 'advisory' was not strong enough.
- 6.8 The Council felt that the role of the local Chair is important as an advocate for the area and that the local role should also be concerned with monitoring and scrutinising as well as capital investment. Task and finish groups may be a way forward with local people being co-opted onto groups to bring their expertise.
- 6.9 Adrian felt that the Chair and Area Director will need a loud and supportive voice and in order to gain this a different type of meeting would be needed.
- 6.10 Stuart said that in his experience of regionalisation it is the extent to which you can input that becomes important. The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole sub-region has strong links with the South East and the strength it brings to the South West is these links.
- 6.11 Kelvyn pointed out that Bournemouth and Poole is a major conurbation, not two small towns and that we will always be on the edge of a region. Although

the sub-region has a number of projects with a series of partners there is no knitting together of the projects.

- 6.12 Andrew felt that this is where the Local Strategic Partnership's should come in and this is an opportunity to strengthen them. The LSP's need to join up to drive themselves collectively forward with the LSC as a key partner. He also pointed out that this was a time for honesty and the local Council has not made many decisions. The real value is in the networking and this shouldn't be the case. It was time to ask whether the council is adding value and whether if they hadn't met would it have made any difference.
- 6.13 Concern was expressed that to be really effective the Council will need officer support.
- 6.14 Valerie pointed out that the number of people starting up in business is falling and we need to promote Dorset as a unique place to work. We have a wealth of expertise but when do we celebrate it, it is time to reflect on what we do well.
- 6.15 Simon said that the strength is in having a bigger voice at the Council and wondered whether the Dorset and Somerset voice would be diluted if the area were to opt for a single council rather than having two voices at the Regional Board. Trish pointed out that Dorset and Somerset will be the second largest area in the region in terms of budget and that there may be some joint areas for the two Councils to work collaboratively on.
- 6.16 Richard mentioned that the Regional Board is moving away from thinking in terms of area towards themes. He gave examples of strategies, sectors and economic drivers. The Regional Strategies are in place and the role for the Regional Board is to now prioritise the needs against our own targets. He agreed with Andrew's earlier point on Local Strategic Partnerships and that the LSC spend needs to complement the work of the partnerships.
- 6.17 Richard also feels that the key relationships for the local Council will be with the Regional Board and local partnership teams. The value will come from knowing what the sub-region needs as well as issues around mergers, re-organisations and new providers.
- 6.18 Trish confirmed that it is wholly appropriate that local people have an influence over the £100million being spent in their area.

Item 7. The Future of the Local Audit Committee

- 7.1 Simon fed back from the Audit Committee's discussion on whether there remained a need for a local Committee now that a Regional Audit Committee has been set up. He explained that the letter from Bryan Gray, Chair of National Audit Committee has accepted the view that if a local Council considered there was still a role for a local committee then this should be accommodated. Simon has written to Bryan Gray asking how the LSC would support this arrangement but has not as yet received a reply. The local Audit Committee recommends that it remains in place during the transition to the new structure and with its future being dependent upon the role of the main Council.

Item 8. Area Director's Report

- 8.1 Trish gave a brief summary of her paper in relation to Theme 7 stating that her senior team are now in place. To date the office has received and supported 14 applications for voluntary severance.
- 8.2 Trish will formally take up post as Area Director of Dorset and Somerset on 1 July 2006.
- 8.3 There is no further news on the arrangements for new buildings/locations and it is anticipated that this will not be completed before 2007.

Item 9. FE White Paper

- 9.1 Richard briefly referred to the FE White Paper and invited Council to read the paper which specifically looks at the implications for the LSC.

Item 10. Any other business

- 10.1 Richard advised Council that this was Tim's last meeting as he is moving on to a national role in DEFRA. The Council wished him well and thanked him for his valued contribution.
- 10.2 Chris told the Council that he is to take up a new position as Diocesan and Director of Education in September. He asked the Council to consider whether they would prefer him to stand down and offer his place to a sixth form representative. Richard asked him to remain whilst the changes to local Council's are being sorted and membership will then be reviewed.

Item 11. Date of next meeting

- 11.1 The next meeting of the Committee will take place on 19 September 2006.

Publication no.

Meeting chair Richard Dimpleby

Minute taker Judith Dewar

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