

Date 20 July 2010
Subject Young People's Learning Agency
Location Rubens Hotel, London
Time 09:00
Publication intent NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Present

- Pete Birkett (Chair)
- Peter Box
- Gareth Dawkins
- Dexter Hutt
- Peter Lauener
- John Merry
- David Pearmain
- Emma Pearson-Winstone
- Helen Sexton
- David Wootton

Observers

- Sue Baldwin (DfE)
- Anne Marie Carrie
- Lesley Davies
- Ian Ferguson
- John Freeman
- David Igoe
- Malcolm Trobe

Executive

- Neil Flint (Director of Academies)
- Sophie Hume-Wright (Policy Advisor)
- Sue Randall (Clerk)
- David Russell (Director of Finance, Funding and Corporate Services)
- Rob Wye (Director of Strategy and Implementation)

In attendance

- Paul Williamson (Director of Strategy and Commissioning)

Support) – items 7 and 9 only
Bob Walding (Director of Business Performance and Communications) – item 8 only

Apologies Apologies have been received from:
Mark Sanders
Michele Sutton
Les Walton

Item 1. Opening comments

- 1.1 The Board appointed Pete Birkett as Chair of the meeting in Les Walton's absence.
- 1.2 The Board approved the appointment of Mark Sanders as Vice-Chair.
- 1.3 The Board reflected on a thought provoking evening session, which had comprised presentations from Phones 4 U and Fairbridge on their work with disengaged young people. A future paper on young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) due in the autumn would reflect on lessons from that session.
- 1.4 The Chief Executive would be arranging to visit the Fairbridge centre in Hackney to learn more about their work.

Item 2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of any interests specific to this meeting.

Item 3. Minutes of the last meeting

- 3.1 Minute 9.1 – replace “million” with “billion”. Subject to this amendment, the minutes were approved.
- 3.2 Members were reminded that Board meeting minutes were published on the YPLA's website, once approved.
- 3.3 The Board's September meeting would include an item, in the Chief Executive's report, clarifying the “Protect” markings, and analysing previous papers to ensure they were being marked appropriately.

Item 4. Matters arising

- 4.1 Funding and commissioning principles for LLDD – a small group of members to form a sub-group to look at the creation of a tailored, focussed system, reporting back to the Board in September. Interested members and

observers were: John Freeman, Mark Sanders, Helen Sexton, Michele Sutton.

Item 5. Updates

Chair's Update (Paper YPLA 09/2010)

- 5.1 Following a request for comments, Board members had submitted their thoughts on 16-19 system priorities, which had been collated and included as an annex to the update. These would be fed into discussions in the autumn.
- 5.2 The Board discussed the content of two tabled letters – one from Schools Minister Nick Gibb to Les Walton, the other from Secretary of State Michael Gove to Baroness Ritchie of Brompton, both dealing with the detail of direct funding. Key among members' comments were:
 - Possible tension between Local Authority responsibility for shaping the provision and institutional responsibility for deciding on the curriculum
 - Possible lack of provider incentive to take on disenfranchised youngsters
 - Need for realistic accountability frameworks
 - The particular challenge for all partners to address and reduce NEETs under new arrangements, in view of the consistent 10% NEET figure which had been discussed in the previous evening's presentation
 - The changes did not imply a planning and commissioning role for YPLA but its role in the production of high quality information and data remained. It was important, though, to ensure this information and data reached schools and colleges as well as local authorities. The best way to do this was by publishing the information on the website and using extant school/college partnership groups
 - The letters were unclear on the performance management of colleges and providers. Clarification would be required for the system to succeed.
- 5.3 The Board signalled its support for the content of the letters. It was noted that the YPLA Chair would confirm the Board's support with ministers.
- 5.4 Detail on the implementation of the issues in the letter was to be brought to the Board's next meeting. Meantime, YPLA colleagues were currently drawing up the necessary administrative arrangements to implement direct funding.

Chief Executive's Update (Paper YPLA 10/2010)

- 5.5 The paper was mainly to note and gave an overview of important developments within the YPLA over the period since the June meeting.
- 5.6 The paper highlighted the challenge the YPLA faced in balancing the efficiency agenda with its increased responsibilities around academies.
- 5.7 The Departmental observer agreed to look into the effect the consultancy freeze was having on the need for expert advice to review high cost LLDD placement decisions.

Action: Sue Baldwin

5.8 In response to concerns, the executive confirmed that work on the Academies Finance system was not currently being held up by reviews of IT systems. More generally, the Skills Funding Agency was confident about receiving an exemption for the development of provider management systems following the submission of a business case.

Item 6. Academies Update (Paper YPLA 11/2010)

- 6.1 In an update on progress with Academies functions, the Board noted:
- Vacancies had reduced to 6, which it was hoped would be filled by transfers within the YPLA or from Government Offices
 - Some temporary transfers had been made to assist with a busy period on grant calculation.
- 6.2 Members acknowledged that while Academy policy was developing quickly, every effort was being made by the YPLA to ensure messages to the sector were consistent and timely.
- 6.3 While the YPLA was working with the Department to design the conversion process, it was clear that it was not within the YPLA's remit to advise schools on the process, which was the responsibility of the Department.
- 6.4 141 applications for conversion had been received by the Department. It was expected that around 50 would open in September. Grant letters were to be despatched at the end of the July, subject to the passing of the Bill.
- 6.5 Ministers would be asked to consider proposals in the autumn for the simplification of the funding methodology for 2011/12. If agreed, much of the risk around replication of the Local Authority formula would disappear.
- 6.6 Discussion about service improvement consultation had begun. It was expected that consultation would be rolled out over the next few months.
- 6.7 Advice from Ministers on education advice and monitoring was currently awaited. It was expected that the YPLA would use its day to day liaison role to keep in touch with academies, with an additional responsibility for commissioning improvement support when needed.

Item 7. YPLA Business Plan – 2010/11 (Paper YPLA 12/2010)

- 7.1 Paul Williamson joined the meeting. The paper presented a draft Annual Plan for the Board to review and comment upon. It was proposed that final sign off of the Plan be delegated to the YPLA Chairman and Chief Executive.
- 7.2 The Plan was a summary of activity, kept deliberately succinct. Currently, efficiency savings required during financial year 2011-12 were not known, so this had caused some planning challenges which were being worked through.
- 7.3 The Board asked for the following amendments/improvements:
- Increased detail on the efficiency agenda in paragraph 15 onwards
 - Board members names to be spell checked as some were incorrect
 - Addition of a contextual foreword.

- 7.4 Members were invited to send additional comments to Paul Williamson or Rob Wye by 23 July.
- 7.5 Authority to sign off the final Plan was delegated to the YPLA Chairman, Chief Executive, Vice-Chair and the meeting Chair.

Item 8. Performance Report (Papers YPLA 13/2010, YPLA 14/2010, YPLA 15/2010)

- 8.1 Bob Walding joined the meeting. He presented a suite of papers giving a comprehensive view of the first quarter performance.
- 8.2 Responsibility for the detailed analysis of the reports would now pass to the Audit and Risk Management Committee which was due to meet for the first time later in July.
- 8.3 General comments on structure included:
 - Tabular summaries were easier to understand
 - The scorecard as currently presented was difficult to understand
 - Consideration to be given to amalgamating the performance and risk reports.
- 8.4 Members were broadly content with the reports. There were concerns around areas such as LLDD placement strategy and budgets, although it was noted that budget variances were not large, and the position felt more comfortable than previously. Staff morale was also an area of concern for the Board. The Chief Executive intended to carry out a further staff survey in the autumn to pinpoint any areas for improvement.
- 8.5 The Chair thanked Bob Walding for the comprehensive set of papers. The item would next come to the Board at its December meeting.

Item 9. Simplification of Funding Systems for 16-19 Education and Training (Paper YPA 16/2010)

- 9.1 The paper presented to the Board had been written prior to the recent Ministerial announcements about changes to streamline and simplify the 16-19 funding allocations system. Work had now commenced on implementation of the changes. An implementation update would be brought to the Board's September meeting.
- 9.2 The National Commissioning Framework was to be withdrawn pending an update in light of the new arrangements.
- 9.3 Letters were to be sent from the Chief Executive to Local Authority Chief Executives and Directors of Children's services and also to providers outlining the new mechanisms that would be put in place for payment arrangements.
- 9.4 Members were invited to assist with the development of process. Members and observers expressing an interest in being involved further were: Malcolm Trobe; Ian Ferguson; Gareth Dawkins; John Freeman; David Igoe; Pete Birkett.
- 9.5 Some specific drafting comments were made as follows:
 - Paragraph 13 – change wording to “developing with”

- Paragraph 19 was not factually correct. This was a drafting error and this would be amended.

9.6 Funding for additional learning support needs in further education colleges and training providers was to be allocated in part by formula and in part by negotiation. The Board asked for clarification on who was to undertake the negotiation. Rob Wye agreed to clarify this for the Board.

Action: Rob Wye

9.7 Members felt that it would be useful to have a non-protected paper which could be distributed for discussion with colleagues. Paul Williamson agreed to compile this and circulate to members shortly.

Action: Paul Williamson

Item 10. Any Other Business

10.1 The first Performance Review of the YPLA was imminent. The Chief Executive agreed to circulate a note to members about the outcome.

Action: Peter Lauener

Item 11. Meeting review

11.1 The Chair summarised key action points and outcomes as follows:

- Mark Sanders was confirmed as vice-Chair
- The shorter agenda had worked well
- A future discussion on “protect” markings to be scheduled
- The academies item to remain a standing item
- Comments on the Business Plan to be submitted by 23 July
- The Audit and Risk Management Committee to scrutinise the Performance and Risk reports
- The Chief Executive to write to Las and to providers about the new arrangements for payment to be introduced from 2010/11
- A sub group to be convened on funding and commissioning principles for LLDDs
- A post 16 funding sub group to be convened

Action Point Summary

Agenda Item	Action	Lead	Status
1.3	Next NEET paper to include reflections on July evening session	Rob Wye	To be planned in forward work programme
3.3	September meeting to include an item consider and clarifying the "Protect" markings, plus an analysis of previous papers	Peter Lauener	To report at September meeting
4.1	Funding and commissioning principles for LLDD – a small group of members to form a sub-group to look at the creation of a tailored, focussed system, reporting back to the Board in September.	David Russell	To report at September meeting
5.1	Board comments on 16-19 system priorities to be fed into discussions in the autumn as appropriate.	Peter Lauener	In progress
5.3	YPLA Chair to confirm Board support for new arrangements to ministers	Les Walton	In progress
5.7	Look into the effect of the consultancy freeze on the availability of expert advice on LLDD assessments.	Sue Baldwin	To report at September meeting
8.5	Performance and risk to next come to the Board in December	Bob Walding	To report to December meeting
9.3	Letter from the Chief Executive to Local Authority Chief Executives and Directors of Children's services outlining the mechanisms in place for payment arrangements.	Peter Lauener	Completed July 2010
9.6	The Board asked for clarification on who was to undertake the negotiation on allocation of additional learning support needs.	Rob Wye	To report to September meeting
9.7	Non-protected paper on simplification of funding systems for 16-19 Education and Training to be sent to Board members	Paul Williamson	By 30 July
10.1	Chief Executive agreed to circulate a note to members about the outcome	Peter Lauener	Completed July 2010

	of the first YPLA Performance Review		
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Meeting chair Pete Birkett
Minutes creator Sue Randall
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