

# West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network

## Management Board Meeting

25 September 2008

### Minutes

**Present:** Stephen Challenger, David Fell, Kaye Fisher, Vivien Jones (Chair), Geoff Layer, Cath Orange, Mark Shields, Edmund Wigan, Craig Williams.

**Attendance:** Ceri Nursaw (Secretariat), Denise Ogden (Finance Officer).

**Apologies:** Ian Billyard, Lis Edwards, Sue Frost, Cristina George, Michele Sutton, Alison Wilson

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were noted (listed above).

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting (12 May 2008)**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

**4. Matters Arising**

Item 5 – The Executive Director has had discussions with members regarding the simplification of the validation process by multiple institutions. It was recognised that some commonality will be possible but there will still need to be elements particular to a relationship with an individual institution, such as resources. This will be taken forward as instances occur.

Item 8 – The ASN allocation criteria will be amended and paragraph 98 of the HEFCE Board report will be corrected accordingly. **Action: Stephen Challenger**

Item 8 - The progression framework has been amended.

Item 9 – The Executive Director circulated the project proposals developed to date which would require capital spend. Each proposal has been asked to develop a business plan. It was **agreed** that in order to approve capital spend projects the WYLLN team will make recommendations to the Chair who will endorse on behalf of the Management Board. **Action: Stephen Challenger**

Item 12 – Craig Williams informed the Board that he was now a representative of Careers Yorkshire and Humber, which has replaced Careers West Yorkshire.

There were no other matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

## 5. **HEFCE Board Report**

The Chair thanked all those that had been involved in putting together this comprehensive and substantial report.

The Executive Director introduced the report (paper 20/08). He asked members to note that:

- The deadline for the report is the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008 and there are still some additions to be made.
- The main financial summary indicates an overspend of £241k as this only relates to the income and expenditure for August 2007-July 2008. A more detailed picture of the Network's financial situation is in Paper 23/08.
- He is still awaiting detail from some partners to finalise the progression agreement information. We are achieving well against target with 38 progression agreements in development against a target of 25. However, it was recognised that in the main these were internal progression and top-ups to foundation degrees so an increasing focus for the Network for future work will be progression into and through Level 3.
- Further information on the 26 curriculum developments planned is available on request.
- HEFCE's learner constituency definition is different from that defined by the Network. To meet HEFCE requirements, the WYLLN will report on all courses where there are progression agreements. For this return, it will only encompass those that have had ASNs allocated in 2007/8.

In response, members expressed a wish to hold a discussion at a future management team on further enhancement and development of progression agreements. Members expressed the views that:

- Learners should have multiple-exit routes (unless it is highly specialised provision)
- Quality should be central to any developments
- Consideration should be given to guaranteed places

Whilst recognising the need for pragmatism in order to ensure all partners can remain engaged it was agreed that as the Network matures we should review our principles for progression agreements. It was agreed to discuss at a future Management Board. **Action: Stephen Challenger / Ceri Nursaw**

It was requested that the footnote on FE – HE links regarding Wakefield is changed as it could be misleading implying that there is no HE provision in the City. The Executive Director will liaise with Kaye Fisher regarding an appropriate form of words. **Action: Stephen Challenger / Kaye Fisher.**

Members were also requested to inform the Executive Director of other progression activities their institutions have been involved in so that they can be included in the table. **Action: All**

It was **agreed** that amendments will be made to the report and the Chair will provide final endorsement (after agreement by the Accountable Body). Members will be circulated the final report. **Action: Stephen Challenger.**

## 6. Operational Plan

The Executive Director introduced the Operational Plan (paper 21/08). He reported that the Strategic Advisory Forum had been consulted on the objectives and they had suggested that 14-19 *curriculum reforms* should be adopted rather than *diplomas* and that progression should underpin all the activities of the Network. In response to a query it was noted that the objectives still relate to the Network's Business Plan.

In discussion it was suggested that the objective to examine credit frameworks et al should be positioned more prominently within the list to give it greater profile. This was **agreed**.

With this amendment the Operational Plan was **approved**.

## 7. Sustainability Report

Members received a paper outlining a suggested sustainability strategy for the Network (paper 22/08). The benefits of a fourth year were felt to be that it would offer continuity (particularly in the co-ordination and management of existing and new progression agreements), meaningful evaluation and academic research would be able to take place (as the learners will be moving into their final destinations) and we can, therefore, be well-positioned to determine the Network's long term future.

It was noted that this proposal does not include reallocation of the funding within the sector budgets and individual sectors may consider continuing their work into the fourth year. Discussions are yet to be held with the sector leads regarding this.

In discussion it was **agreed** to:

- Consider a fourth year
- Enhance the management aspects of the provision in the fourth year
- Ensure that the fourth year ends in a crescendo

- Have a very clear action plan for the fourth year outlining outcomes and milestones for work, for example, on credit framework and multiple-route progression agreements
- Start to consider what would happen beyond the lifetime of the HEFCE funding.

It was **agreed** the Executive Director will work with members to further develop this proposal (noting that it would be a different composition from the sustainability sub-group) and will bring a proposal to the next Board meeting. **Action: Stephen Challenger.**

## 8. Financial Report

The Finance Officer outlined the financial report provided for members' approval (paper 23/08). She highlighted:

- The total underspend to date is £612k which represents 33% of the budget for 2007/8
- The core activity is underspent due in the main to the MIS system and choosing a cheaper supplier.
- Within partnership delivery the sector lead funding is the main area for underspend at £234k which is due predominantly to the sector groups not claiming for curriculum development activity. Discussions have been held with the sector leads and guidance on accessing and allocating funding is to be issued. Furthermore, sector leads have been asked to provide detailed plans on anticipated spend with financial profiles by November 2008. Evidence of spend against profile by sector leads will be provided by April 2009.
- The cashflow has grown from the agreed £170k to £360k

Members thanked the Finance Officer for her report and recognised the stringent financial management that was in place.

The Finance Officer and Executive Director presented the proposed budget plans (paper 23/08) which address the underspends detailed earlier in the report. It was noted that work will be on-going as with the sector leads to manage their spend. Following the discussions held regarding the sustainability strategy it was **agreed** to rework scenario B which extends project activity and expenditure to the 31 July 2011 with the addition of increased management support.

In addition it was suggested that there would be two new budget lines supporting employer engagement and the 14-19 reforms worth approximately £80k each. The Executive Director referred to the presentation by Kevin Whitson (Head of Widening Participation at HEFCE) at the dissemination event of the CHERI review of Lifelong Learning Networks. HEFCE which identified two areas where LLNs could play a major role – employer engagement and 14-19 diplomas. Currently for diplomas no resource was available to FE and HE to develop the pathways

from diplomas into further or higher study. It was **agreed** that funding would be made available for these two areas.

The budgets will be reworked for the December Board meeting. **Action: Denise Ogden / Stephen Challenger.**

Members welcomed the new format for reporting and the Finance Officer was thanked for the report

#### **9. Partnership with Axia - Proposal**

The Executive Director presented a paper outlining the Network's proposed business model for engaging with Axia Interactive Ltd (paper 24/08). It was suggested that any share of profit generated from the relationship should be distributed 70% to the partnership; of the remaining 30%, 70% will be made available for the future development of the product; the remainder will be retained by the University of Huddersfield's trading arm. As the Network is not a legal entity a memorandum of understanding would need to be established with each of the network partners. The model is still subject to the University of Huddersfield's endorsement.

In discussions members **agreed** that contracts with individual organisations would be too cumbersome for the sums likely to be involved and as the University of Huddersfield is carrying the risk they should own the IPR. It was agreed that the relationship with Axia Interactive Ltd is with the University of Huddersfield but any profit should be to the benefit of the learners. The Executive Director will take this forward with the University of Huddersfield. **Action: Stephen Challenger.**

*Geoff Layer left the meeting.*

#### **10. Executive Director's Report**

The Executive Director presented his report (paper 25/08).

He asked the view of members for the suggestion by the IAG Task Group to increase funding to institutions which exceed their target to the level received by large institutions. In discussion it was raised that:

- Large institutions will not get more funding if they exceed their targets
- IAG should be a core activity for all partners
- Recognition that some individuals may need more personalised support which is not available within mainstream provision.

*Mark Shields left the meeting*

It was **agreed** that additional funding would not be allocated.

The Executive Director was thanked for his report.

**11. Any Other Business**

The Executive Director informed members that the team are moving towards an account manager structure – that is one member of the team will be responsible for liaison across individual institutions and they will be in touch to arrange a meeting.

## Action Summary

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1.	ASN allocation criteria to be amended and included in the HEFCE Board report	Stephen Challenger
2.	Recommendations on capital spend to be forwarded to the Chair for endorsement.	Stephen Challenger
3.	Progression agreements to be a future discussion item at the Board	Stephen Challenger / Ceri Nursaw
4.	Amendment to the FE-HE footnote of the Board report regarding Wakefield	Stephen Challenger / Kaye Fisher
5.	Institutions to inform the Executive Director of any further progression activities to be included in the HEFCE Board Report.	All
6.	HEFCE Board report to be amended and approved by the Chair.	Stephen Challenger
7.	Finalised HEFCE Board report to be circulated to members	Stephen Challenger
8.	Sustainability proposal to be presented at the next meeting	Stephen Challenger
9.	Budgets to be reworked in light of fourth year proposal and to be presented at the next meeting	Denis Ogden / Stephen Challenger
10.	Discussions to be held with the University of Huddersfield regarding the partnership with Axia Interactive Ltd	Stephen Challenger