

**West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network  
Management Board Meeting  
19 March 2009**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Ian Billyard, Stephen Challenger, Vivien Jones (Chair), Cath Orange, Michele Sutton (item 7 onwards), Tim Thornton, Alison Wilson (item 7 onwards)

**Attendance:** Joanne Beaumont (WYLLN), Ceri Nursaw (Secretariat), Alan Spain (Finance, WYLLN).

**Apologies:** David Fell, Kaye Fisher, Cristina George, Geoff Layer, Stephanie Lynch, Mark Shields, Edmund Wigan, Craig Williams

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies were noted (listed above). It was reported that Stephanie Lynch is no longer at HEFCE and Lis Edwards is the named replacement.

**Action: Ceri Nursaw.**

Congratulations were extended to Michele Sutton on her MBE for services to education and the community.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Ian Billyard declared an interest for item 12 – Additional Student Numbers. No other declarations of interest were received.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting (15 December 2008)**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

**4. Matters Arising**

Actions 4, 8, 9 are ongoing

Actions 7, 10, 14, 16 have been completed.

Action 3 – Members discussed the response received from the HEFCE regarding attendance at the Board (included within Paper 44/08). Members noted that HEFCE was actively engaged with a number of Lifelong Learning Networks. It was suggested that the Chair, the Accountable Body representative and the Executive Director should meet with the new Regional Consultant to discuss. **Action: Ceri Nursaw.**

Action 5 – The Executive Director and representatives from the other regional LLNs to discuss the higher-level skills commissioning document. Further discussions are now taking place on an individual basis.

Action 6 – The equality and diversity monitoring reports will be part of the Network’s Annual Review, which will be presented to the Board in September. Members **agreed** to receive the information within that report. It was noted that that the evaluation will look at equality and diversity.

Action 13 – The showcase event on the 30 March 2009 is intended to ensure there is a greater understanding of the work of the Network. If it is successful the intention is to roll it out to other parts of the sub-region.

Action 15 – Two areas of best practice from Calderdale College have been identified (i) the focusing of resources and effort into particular initiatives and (ii) engagement of the business development teams. This has been disseminated.

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

**5. Chair’s Action**

Members noted Chair’s action taken on behalf of the Management Board since last meeting (paper 35/08).

**6. Business Model**

The Executive Director introduced two models for the funding of partners in light of the establishment of Leeds City College (paper 36/08). Model 1 was the introduction of a tiered funding model predicated on student numbers, whilst Model 2 maintained the current allocation principles. Members were informed that the Strategic Advisory Forum had proposed a third model in which Leeds City College would continue to be treated as three colleges for a further academic year.

Members **endorsed** the proposal from the Strategic Advisory Forum, which would result in Leeds City College receiving £52.5k.

**7. WYLLN’s Response to the Recession**

The Executive Director outlined WYLLN’s work to date in response to the current recession (paper 37/08). The Strategic Advisory Forum had discussed greater engagement with Jobcentre Plus through operationalising the relationship, for example via progression agreements.

*Michele Sutton joined the meeting.*

Members **agreed** that they would wish to see WYLLN explore opportunities for partnership with Jobcentre Plus whether or not the Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF) proposal is successful. **Action: Stephen Challenger.**

It was noted that Bradford College had not been listed as a partner within

the ECIF proposal. This was an error and it was noted that the intention had been that Bradford College should be part of any future programme.  
*Alison Wilson joined the meeting.*

The Executive Director informed members that the ECIF results would be announced on the 7 April 2009. It was noted those applications which have come forward from the region which are not successful will be reviewed by Yorkshire Forward.

## 8. Projects

The Executive Director introduced Paper 38/08, which outlined the project submissions received to date. There is £425k potentially available for project work and the request for funding totals £574.8k. The Executive Director will publish a deadline for submissions with a view to final decision on projects to be funded made by the end of May.

It was **agreed** that a member of the Board should chair a project assessment panel comprised of WYLLN officers to determine which projects should be funded. **Action: Stephen Challenger.**

## 9. Financial Report

Alan Spain, WYLLN Finance Officer, presented a report on expenditure to date for the financial year 2008/9 (Paper 39/08). He highlighted:

- The report is based on actual reported spend rather than anticipated spend. This is a change from the previous reports but provides members with more accurate information.
- Confidence in meeting budgeted spend for those areas managed directly by the core team

Alan Spain presented the position for each of the sector groups:

- Engineering  
No concerns. Very transparent as contracting for delivery.
- Business  
No concerns. However, partners are not claiming in full or on time so there is difficulty in evidencing all expenditure.
- Construction  
Greater confidence as over the last two months have higher expenditure levels. Again, partners are not claiming in full or on time so monthly reporting has been introduced.
- Culture  
They are tying expenditure to outputs and are achieving current workplan.
- Digital  
There is no concern regarding meeting targets but may not meet expenditure levels. This is due to the late appointment of the sector officer and therefore there was slippage in the run up to March 2009.

- Health  
This is the most concerning sector. It should be noted that there is an additional £11k expenditure anticipated which will bring their percentage spend against pro-rata budget to 21%. The slippage is due to the late appointment of a sector officer.
- Management  
No concern regarding achievement of outputs and has been a strong performer. They are contracting for delivery.

It was proposed that we make a final decision in the June 2009 Board meeting as confidence levels have grown due to monthly reporting. Sector Groups have been asked to make returns on the 4 June 2009.

In discussion members **agreed to** review expenditure in June but stressed that this would be the final date and funding would be clawed back if no evidence of expenditure. Members noted that there were sufficient quality project submissions and sector group work (for those which were meeting targets), which could take up any underspend. Further we could commission work to meet specific targets.

To avoid any misunderstanding it was suggested that the Executive Director writes to all sector leads and partners stressing the importance and reminding colleagues of the final June date. **Action: Stephen Challenger.**

Members thanked Alan Spain for his work to date and looked forward to the June report.

#### 10. External Evaluation

The Executive Director reported that four Board members including himself had assessed the evaluation submissions (paper 40/08). It had been agreed that Lilian Black should carry out the evaluation. Care was taken by the panel to ensure we receive an independent evaluation and Lilian Black's was identified as the best proposal as it demonstrated sensitivity to the needs of the learners and an understanding of the complexity of West Yorkshire. Members **endorsed** the panel's decision.

Members **agreed** that 2/3 Board members should regularly meet with the evaluator to oversee progress, on terms that ensure the evaluation's objectivity. The Executive Director was asked to identify members. **Action: Stephen Challenger.**

#### 11. Additional Student Numbers

The Executive Director presented the paper on additional student numbers (paper 41/08) and asked members to note that paragraph 2.1 should read 'The Network has been informed that there will be *no* more additional student numbers available for allocation'. He asked members to consider

when we should mainstream the additional student numbers.

The Accountable Body representative noted that though mainstreaming would be easier for the University of Huddersfield it was recognised that the current methodology can help partners to offer modular provision and buffer the effects of small numbers.

Members were reassured that there were learners who wanted module provision and the Executive Director is currently contacting institutions to understand more fully the take-up.

Members **agreed** to continue the current methodology for allocating additional student numbers.

## 12. Progression Agreements

Joanne Beaumont presented an update on the implementation of progression agreements (paper 42/08). The majority of progression agreements are addressing the additional elements. She thanked the members of the recognition panel, which had already endorsed 25 progression agreements (these are available on the website) with a further 6 currently under consideration. It is anticipated that there will be 100 progression agreements by July 2009. Key challenges have been identified:

- Visibility of the learner agreement
- Ownership by the institution

The focus going forward is on Level 3 to Level 4 progression and multi-exit/entry. Work is to be undertaken to identify gaps in provision so as to provide progression agreements where no clear routes currently exist.

Members were asked to consider whether we should consider the adoption of progression agreements with organisations outside of West Yorkshire. It was noted that in a previous Board (and on advice from HEFCE) we decided to focus on the West Yorkshire geographical boundary. However, members felt it was important to 'count' them and **agreed** they should be reported separately to the HEFCE.

Members thanked Joanne Beaumont for her report.

## 13. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director presented his report (paper 43/08). He highlighted the XCRi Dissemination Event on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2009. XCRi is a standard for course information, which is compatible with a variety of software systems. Members were interested in these developments but needed reassurance that this is the standard used at different institutions.

Members thanked the Executive Director for his report.

#### 14. Membership

Ceri Nursaw presented members with an update to Board membership (paper 44/08). She reported that she had received comment from Geoff Layer; in summary:

- That he had not formally resigned but due to his current role he has difficulty attending the meetings
- Senior staff roles at the University are current under review and that a direct replacement may not be available until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 or later.
- Anyone representing the University on the Board will have the full authority of the University in the same way he has and would not like to be restricted by titles and nomenclature
- Not seeking to send alternates or substitutes but to nominate a replacement until appointment is made to new senior roles.

Members welcomed the University of Bradford's contribution to the Network to date and felt it was important that it continued. There was consensus that representation should remain at a senior level (that is Pro-Vice-Chancellor or Dean). This is particularly in light of key difficult decisions to be taken in the next few months, for example, possibly sector group funding clawback (for those that have underspent) and future of the Network. Members asked that Bradford University reconsider their suggested nomination to the Board. **Action: Geoff Layer.**

#### 15. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

## Action Summary

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Carried Forward from Previous Meeting</b>		
1.	Approach four Universities to ascertain whether they wish to provide modular allocation of ASNs to FE	Stephen Challenger
2.	Identification of the number of Level 3 diploma learners in West Yorkshire	Stephen Challenger / Cristina George.
3.	Business Case for the future of the Network to be brought to the Board	Stephen Challenger
<b>Actions from 19 March 2009</b>		
4.	The Chair, the Accountable Body representative and the Executive Director to meet with the new Regional Consultant to discuss membership.	Ceri Nursaw
5.	Opportunities for partnership with Jobcentre Plus to be explored.	Stephen Challenger
6.	Establishment of a project assessment panel – chaired by a Board member.	Stephen Challenger
7.	Letter to go to all sector leads and partners stressing the importance of completion of their financial returns and reminding colleagues of the final June date.	Stephen Challenger
8.	Establishment of a Group to oversee the evaluation's progress	Stephen Challenger
9.	Bradford University to reconsider their suggested nomination to the Board.	Geoff Layer