

**West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network
Management Board Meeting
25 June 2009**

Minutes

Present: Ian Billyard, Stephen Challenger, Kaye Fisher, Vivien Jones (Chair), Geoff Layer, Michele Sutton, Tim Thornton, Craig Williams, Alison Wilson, Simone Wonnacott

In Attendance: Joanne Beaumont (WYLLN), Joanne Charlesworth, Lis Edwards (HEFCE), Ceri Nursaw (Secretariat), Alan Spain (Finance, WYLLN).

Apologies: David Fell, Cristina George, Denise Ogden, Cath Orange, Mark Shields

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were noted (listed above). Simone Wonnacott and Lis Edwards were welcomed to the Board.

2. Declarations of Interest

It was noted that the majority of the Board had vested interests in item 9 'Additional Student Numbers'. No other declarations of interest were received.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (19 March 2009)

[It was noted outside the meeting that Michele Sutton has been awarded an *OBE* rather than an *MBE* as minuted and with this amendment] the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

Action 1 – No approach has been made to the Universities to ascertain whether they wish to provide a modular allocation of ASNs to FE. The modular numbers are extremely low and members noted the need to exercise caution regarding the accountability of ASNs. With regret it was **agreed** by members that modular allocation would not be taken forward.

Action 2 – The Executive Director understands that there are 60 Level 3 diploma learners in West Yorkshire (42 on the creative and media diploma and 18 on construction). Greater take-up in the future is anticipated with the SSAT requiring that in order to maintain specialist school status schools should offer diplomas. Joanne Beaumont reported that work has been on-going by the Network via the 14-19 Steering Group, which includes representatives from the local authority and Further and Higher Education.

Response from the diploma consortia to date has been disappointing but one-to-ones are to be held with the education authorities. Funding has been allocated to support multi-exit/entry progression agreements. Members were encouraged to consider developing progression agreements based on the first three diploma lines. **Action: All.**

During discussions members asked that Connexions should be made aware of any progression agreements. It was noted that an information booklet would be produced in March to complement careers advice in this area.

Actions 4 – It was reported by the Secretariat that contact had been made with HEFCE's Regional Consultant who reported that the policy for attendance at all LLNs was that it would be in cases where substantive items on sustainability or legacy issues were to be discussed. HEFCE's representative reported that they correspond regularly with the directorate and were keen to ensure effective communication. It was noted that the Regional Consultant was at the University of Huddersfield on the 10 July and an invitation was given to the Executive Director, if available. It was **agreed** that we would seek a meeting with the Regional Consultant if there were further areas of concern regarding communication with HEFCE.

Actions 6, 7 - completed.

Action 9 – It was reported by Bradford University that a review of the senior team was still on-going and that this may impact in the future on Board membership.

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

5. **Financial Report / Sector Activity**

Papers 5 and 6 were taken together.

The WYLLN Financial Administrator introduced the financial report (Paper 45/08) and reported that whilst the budget was still underspent the level of reported expenditure within the sector groups has increased.

In terms of partnership funding the majority of the underspend was due to partners viewing the funding as a two-year rather than one-year allocation. Further to this one institution has not taken up their allocation this year. Members **agreed** to the roll-forward of funding on the basis of clear expenditure targets.

It was reported that sector group expenditure had increased with 95% of the roll-forward funding being evidenced. With reference to the Sector Activity report (Paper 46/08), Joanne Beaumont informed members that the level of funding was not always an indicator of level of activity and that work-plans

are in place for all sector groups. Of particular note was that the majority of sector groups were engaging well with key strategic bodies and that Construction and the Built Environment had brought in external funding. Out of the seven sector groups, five had achieved the expenditure target with two underspent. It was **agreed** to clawback any underspend from the sector groups.

Four sector groups have indicated a willingness to extend to a fourth year and they are currently drafting a sustainability plan, which will come to Board early next calendar year. **Action: Stephen Challenger.**

Members were asked to consider whether curriculum development activity should continue in light of the cap on ASNs. This would be considered within the ASN discussion (agenda item 9).

HEFCE's representative thanked the team for a very comprehensive report. The changes would normally result in the HEFCE requiring a reprofile of the budget. However, as the request for a further year is imminent it can be built into the request.

Thanks were expressed to Alan Spain, Denise Ogden and all the sector groups who have responded.

7. **Projects**

Members received a paper (Paper 47/08) detailing the projects proposed for funding.

The Chair of the Strategic Advisory Forum (SAF) reported that at the last SAF there had been mixed views regarding the XCRi project but it had been left open as to whether it should go ahead.

In discussion members noted that the area-wide prospectus should be integrated. In response Joanne Charlesworth reported that a range of institutions have agreed to join the pilot. JISC and UCAS have also expressed strong interest.

Members **endorsed** the projects for funding.

8. **Future of the Network**

The Executive Director presented the paper outlining future plans for the network (Paper 48/08) which if approved would be submitted to the HEFCE. The premise was to establish a small central team with the addition three sector groups. The sector groups chosen will be dependent on a business case to be presented to the Board early next calendar year.

Feedback from the HEFCE representative noted that the proposal was a

combination of catch-up and extension and recognised the benefits which would accrue from a fourth year. A full reprofile would be required but based on this information it is likely that HEFCE would be minded to approve the request.

The Chair of the SAF reported that at the last meeting members were happy with the approach.

In discussion:

- It was noted that whilst there was synergy with ECIF (which will end in September 2010) HEFCE have requested that it is kept outside of this extension request.
- It was suggested that putting it within a Leeds City-Region context may be useful.

It was **agreed** that the submission should include greater emphasis on the partnership and multi-institutional multi exit/entry progression agreements and should set out the principles of the partnership and its vision.

With these comments it was agreed the submission will be redrafted for approval by the Chair and the Accountable Body representative before being forwarded to the HEFCE. **Action: Stephen Challenger.**

9. **Additional Student Numbers**

The Executive Director presented the paper on additional student numbers (Paper 49/08) which raised three issues regarding

- a. Redistribution – less than 50 additional student numbers (ASNs) will be available to partners. The SAF preference was for the ASNs to be allocated to new curriculum developments rather than foundation degree top ups.
- b. Mainstreaming – if this is to go ahead there is the issue that one partner does not have a HEFCE contract so will need to enter into a franchise arrangement.
- c. Potential Repayment – Due to not fulfilling the terms of the contract there is a possibility of a repayment of £48k. It was noted, however, there is a £50k *de minimus* repayment requirement. The SAF suggestion was that, were a repayment to be required, those who were responsible for the shortfall should repay.

In discussion members expressed their dismay at the lack of ASNs available and noted that we had built demand with particular communities which we will not be able to meet.

In response the HEFCE representative noted the unfortunate position and that efforts have been made to persuade DIUS (now BIS) of the need for ASNs. It is unlikely that the Network will receive ASNs for 2010/11 as there

is a very small number to distribute. The HEFCE Board will consider the priorities in September.

Members noted the difficulty in determining the future but noted the strength of the Network; the ECIF proposal showed how we can rapidly respond across the FE and HE sectors in partnership.

In discussions members noted the difficult nature of the decision but agreed that the Network should prioritise supporting learners' progression into rather than through higher education and that the Network's role should be to support change and innovation.

In response to the specific issues raised in the paper members therefore **agreed** that:

- The remaining ASNs should be used to support new curriculum developments and that they will be prioritised within a set of criteria regarding their impact and innovative nature.
- ASNs will be mainstreamed and that this should be finalised by December 2009.
- In the event of a funding clawedback a 'pass-through' model will be adopted, seeking the funding from those responsible.

10. Economic Challenge Investment Fund

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked the Executive Director and his team for putting together the proposal so effectively within such a short timescale.

The Board's expressed its disappointment at the delay in receiving HEFCE's approval of the bid, the consequent difficulties in drawing down funding within the planned timescale, and the possible effects on activities.

In an update to the paper (Paper 50/08) the Executive Director reported to members that Yorkshire Forward was confident that funding would be available in August. Conversations have been held with the HEFCE regarding whether work can start in advance of formal confirmation from Yorkshire Forward. Whilst this is possible, the HEFCE have confirmed that there is the possibility of clawback if match-funding is not secured.

Yorkshire Forward suggested that this could be mitigated by small applications which could provide the necessary funding pre-August to start work.

It was **agreed** that Yorkshire Forward, the HEFCE and the Executive Director would meet to determine a way forward. **Action: Stephen Challenger, Lis Edwards and Alison Wilson.**

11. Executive Director's Report

Members noted the report (Paper 51/08). The Executive Director highlighted that both Joanne Charlesworth and Rachael Brough are starting their maternity leave in September and that he is in the process of appointing replacements to manage this.

The Chair on behalf of the Board thanked the team for the celebration event which was very positive and well organised.

12. Any Other Business

The Chair thanked Lis Edwards for her contribution.

Action Summary

	Action	Responsibility
Actions from 25 June 2009		
1.	Members were encouraged to consider developing progression agreements based on the first three diploma lines.	All
2.	A business plan for the sector group extension to the fourth year to be presented to the first Board of 2010.	Stephen Challenger
3.	The proposal for the future of the Network to be redrafted in light of members' comments and (on approval from the Chair and the Accountable Body representative) submitted to the HEFCE.	Stephen Challenger
4.	Yorkshire Forward, the HEFCE and the Executive Director to meet to determine a way forward for the Economic Challenge Investment Fund project.	Stephen Challenger, Lis Edwards and Alison Wilson.