

**MINUTES OF THE LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS NATIONAL ADVISORY
GROUP MEETING HELD IN SANCTUARY BUILDINGS ON
13th DECEMBER 2001**

Present

Kate Bagshaw, DfES (**Secretary**)
Pauline Bailey, Gloucestershire LSC
Janet Bell, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
Sue Dutton, Association of Colleges
Ray Flude, Leicestershire & Leicester City Learning Partnership
Ian Goodwin, DfES
Jacqui Henderson, London Central Learning and Skills Council
Pratibha Hindocha, Learning Communities Network
Kate Keefe, Catholic Education Service
Maggie Mooney, Secondary Heads Association
Peter Mucklow, DfES (**Chair**)
Janice Piggott, South London Learning Partnership
Mike Platten, Cambridgeshire Learning Partnership
Sue Taylor, Learning and Skills Development Agency
Jeanette Trafford, Durham Learning Partnership
Janet Waghorn, Kent Learning Partnership
Barrie Whittamore, Government Office East Midlands
John Wise, London Learning Partnerships

Apologies

Mike Barrett, Government Office East Midlands (Barrie Whittamore substituted)
Greg Cejer, Learning and Skills Council
Michael Howard, Tyneside Learning Partnership
Elaine Kennedy, DfES
Jim Lewis, Learning City Network (Pratibha Hindocha substituted)
Irene Loh Lyn, North West Learning Partnerships
Eileen Manley, Careers Service National Association
Mike McCann, National EBP network
Ian Moore, Local Government Association
Margaret Murray, Confederation of British Industry
Martin Norfield, DfES
Cllr Roy Pinney, Birmingham Learning Partnership
Roy Porritt, Government Office Yorkshire & the Humber
Anthea Turner, Church of England & Methodist Church
Jill Valentine, Ufi Ltd
Cal Weatherald, UACE/NIACE
Jill Wilson, Calderdale Learning Partnership
Bill Wood, National Training Federation
Paul Warner, TBG Learning

Chairman's Welcome and Introduction

1. Chair, Peter Mucklow, welcomed members to this special meeting of the national Advisory Group which had been convened at short notice following Margaret Hodge's address to the Learning Partnerships National Conference on 29 November.
2. He briefly outlined the background to the Minister's message which had followed on from a number of progress updates to her on Learning Partnerships. He reported that the Minister was particularly keen to look at the strategic positioning of Learning Partnerships and relationships with others (including the LSC), and at their achievements to date in respect of their three core roles of delivering improved provider collaboration, gathering learner feedback and identifying local learner, community and employer needs.

Review of Learning Partnerships

3. Peter stressed the need to take account of a wide range of views in the review process and he outlined to group members the communication which was already underway. This had included correspondence with the Chairs of Learning Partnerships and with members of the National Advisory Group and their respective Directors and Chief Executives.
4. There was a need to take account of the views of other Government Departments and Estelle Morris would be writing to her Ministerial colleagues seeking these.
5. The review process, which would run up to Friday 15th February, would inform DfES advice to Ministers and the subsequent announcement during March about resources for 2003-4.
6. Comments from group members in response to the planned review of Learning Partnerships included:
 - a broadly "uneasy" welcome. Members agreed the time was right with the establishment of the LSC but there were concerns about retaining neutrality and independence and the need to fully recognise the good work Learning Partnerships were doing;
 - issues over how the process of review would be perceived. Members felt it was bound to re-awaken concerns about a continuing role for Learning Partnerships;
 - the need for recognition that whilst senior professionals understand what Learning Partnerships are about, local practitioners often don't;
 - the need for clarification over the scope of the review and where best to focus efforts on articulating Learning Partnerships' contribution to date;

- the need to seize this as an opportunity to demonstrate Learning Partnerships' strategic impact and to articulate some key strategic roles which only they could provide;
 - the importance of linking with local LSCs and local strategic partnerships in responding to the review;
 - the need to strike a balance between local and national views, in particular commitment from the LSC.
7. Peter Mucklow confirmed the Department was mindful that this could be a potentially debilitating period and it was partly for this reason that a fairly short review period was planned. Peter was keen for Ministers to get a very clear picture of what it was Learning Partnerships could and were doing and reiterated the need for Learning Partnerships' to prove their added value and to articulate what it was that they could do because of their unique structure.
 8. The Learning Partnerships team was in the process of producing a framework for the review - a limited number of broad, open questions - which would be circulated to Learning Partnership Chairs and National Advisory Group members ASAP (**Action Point:DfES**). The framework would also be available on the DfES Learning Partnership and Consultation websites.
 9. The Group agreed it would be important to frame a set of questions which were forward looking and which articulated where we wanted to get to. They shouldn't dwell too much on what had gone before as the York Consulting evaluation exercise was already serving that purpose. Members then brainstormed the types of questions which might be included in the review framework.
 10. Peter confirmed that the LP/LSC relationship would be a key issue. He felt that in putting forward its views, the LSC national office would be heavily influenced by local Executive Directors' views based on their experience of their respective local Learning Partnerships. Peter also reminded group members what the Minister had said in her address about the need for others to refocus – including the LSC.
 11. The Group felt an important stage in the process would be to engage the original “key partners” as strategic policy players at the end of the review period. It was agreed that the Advisory Group meeting planned for 8th February 2002 should form part of this process.
 12. Members also felt it would be vital through the review process to reinforce what Learning Partnerships could offer across other Government Departments; it would be important to articulate this from the centre and in Government's response.

Next Steps

13. The Advisory Group's discussions would feed into the Learning Partnerships review framework which would then be made available by latest w/c 15th December **(Action Point: DfES)**.
14. Group members also to be informed exactly who had been engaged to date and what further communication was planned. **(Action Point: DfES)**.

AOB and Dates of Future Meetings

15. Three further meetings of the National Advisory Group were planned for 2002 on:

Friday 8 February
Thursday 6 June
Thursday 3 October
16. It was agreed that the February meeting should concentrate largely on the Learning Partnerships review and that members should come to the meeting prepared to share a flavour of their respective consultations. This would then provide further added value before the end of the review process.