

LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP  
MINUTES OF MEETING 3rd MAY 2002

Present

Sue Dutton, Association of Colleges  
Jane Dyer, DfES Learning Partnerships (Secretary)  
Ian Goodwin, DfES, Team Leader, Learning Partnerships  
Jacqui Henderson, London Central Learning and Skills Council  
Michael Howard Chair, Tyneside Learning Partnership  
Elaine Kennedy, DfES School Admissions, Organisation and Governance Division  
Peter Mucklow, DfES, Division Manager, Further Education and Partnerships (Chair)  
Sue Taylor, Learning and Skills Development Agency  
Jeanette Trafford, Durham Learning Partnership  
Janet Waghorn, Kent Learning Partnership  
John Wise, London Learning Partnerships  
Jim Lewis, Learning Communities Network  
Graham Morris, Plymouth Learning and Work Partnership  
Anthea Turner, Churches National Adviser in Further Education, Church of England and Methodist Church  
Mary Heslop, DfES, Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit  
Mike McCann, National EBP Network  
Janet Bell, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Education Dept.  
Maureen Wilcock, Thurrock LP  
Allen Taylor, GO East Midlands

Apologies

Pauline Bailey, Gloucestershire LSC  
Helen English, SW LP  
Mary Heslop, ABSSU  
Margaret Murray, CBI  
Roy Porritt, GO Y&H  
Jill Valentine, Ufi  
Barrie Whittamore, GO EM

Chairman's Welcome and Introduction

1. Peter Mucklow welcomed members to the meeting where the purpose was to:
  - seek views from national partners on the announcement by Margaret Hodge of new core roles for Learning Partnerships and the change, from April 2003, in the funding route from GOs to the LSC; and
  - take the views of the group on handling the transition to the new arrangements.
2. The Group agreed minutes of the last meeting and apologies were made to Janet Bell for missing her off the last meeting attendees.

## Learning Partnerships Review

3. Peter set out the background and rationale for the Minister's announcement, supplementing the letters and question and answer brief circulated with papers for the meeting. A near final draft of the public report summarising responses to the review was tabled.

**Action:** LP team will finalise the report and put on the LP website – **done**.

4. Peter then invited members to give reactions to the announcement and the following summarises the discussion:

- Learning Partnerships now have two clear roles, have an opportunity to benefit from the closer alignment with the LSC and will retain the flexibility to address local issues. Learning Partnerships will play an integral role in planning the transition.
- There may be changes to the existing structure after April 2004 but that does not mean to say there will be wholesale reform to the structure, nor is there any assumption that there should be 47 Learning Partnerships coterminous with local LSCs, or any other set number of Partnerships nationally.
- DfES guidance on the Learning Partnership role in regeneration would be welcomed and this will need to cover the DfES/DTLR relationship. Good practice examples would also be helpful.
- There is work to do in getting Local Strategic Partnerships to understand the work of LPs.
- Important to re-visit the DfES/LSC protocol to clarify the new relationship. John Harwood's commitment to funding the existing network was welcomed but there was some concern about whether Learning Partnerships would be dealt with consistently in every LLSC area.
- Learning Partnership Managers would welcome some medium-term security after a period of uncertainty and it was suggested that the LSC might offer three-year contracts, with an annual review and minimal bureaucracy.
- Value of regional networks, currently facilitated by GOs, emphasised. Important that this is sustained through transition and under new arrangements.
- Need for Learning Partnerships to continue to respond to the wider Government agenda – some concern that the alignment with the LSC narrowed their focus.
- Regional and national conferences felt to be important – joint DfES/LSC action proposed.

5. Peter asked the Learning Partnership Team to ensure that an initial five key themes were addressed in the transition:

- The regional dimension – clarity on the future roles of the LSC, GO and RDA in

supporting Learning Partnerships.

- Professional development and support for Learning Partnership managers.
- The need for DfES to promote Learning Partnerships within DfES and across Government.
- The need to develop protocols/codes of practice on LSC/LP relationship.
- The desirability of non-bureaucratic contracting relationships with the LSC which would provide stability for learning partnerships and avoid the vagaries of bidding rounds.

#### Planning for Transition

6. Ian set out initial thoughts on managing the transition, which are now summarised at annex B of the public report.

- NAG will meet next in the autumn but will receive monthly updates on transition.
- Transition plans / timescales will be drawn up and placed on the LP web-site in June. The LP newsletter will continue on a quarterly basis and we will look at ways of using the YCL website discussion group more productively as another way of identifying and responding to emerging issues and concerns.
- Transition Steering Group, with LP, LSC, GO and DTLR involvement, will meet for first time in June (confirmed now for 10<sup>th</sup> June). Major themes as set out in paragraph 5.
- Information and Guidance for Learning Partnerships will be updated by July.
- Evaluation will continue but will focus more on support for Learning Partnerships through transition and the identification and dissemination of good practice.

#### AOB and Dates of Future Meetings

7. The Group felt the 6<sup>th</sup> June meeting was too soon but will meet again 3<sup>rd</sup> October as planned. **Action:** Group to note that 6<sup>th</sup> June meeting is cancelled and Learning Partnerships team to organise domestics for 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Janice Shiner to be invited to next meeting.

Jane Dyer  
May 2002