### Minutes

**Date**  
26 April 2007

**Subject**  
Adult Learning Committee

**Location**  
LSC London Offices

**Time**  
10:00

**LSC office**  
National Office (London)

**Publication intent**  
Internal

### Present

- Frances O'Grady (Chair)
- Richard Atkins
- Tony Chandler
- Pat McMullan
- Graham Taylor
- Judith Armitt (to item 7)

### In attendance

- Chris Banks, LSC Chair (item 7)
- Chris Barnham, DfES
- Mick Downing, JobCentre Plus

### LSC officials

- Jaine Clarke
- Madeleine Durie
- Jon Gamble
- Priya Gossain
- Karen Riley

### Apologies

- Alex Pratt
- Giles Clarke
- Anthony Massouras
- Alan Tuckett
- Pat Passley
- Chris Humphries
- John Landeryou, Ofsted
- Cathy Hughes, Jobcentre Plus
- Stephen Hillier, DfES
- David Way, LSC
- Melanie Hunt, LSC

### Item 1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 Frances O'Grady welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Judith Armitt for chairing the last meeting on her behalf. She gave a particular welcome to Madeleine Durie and Karen Riley who had recently joined the LSC as Directors in Skills Group and were presenting items at the Committee for the first time. Also Chris Barnham and Mick Downing were attending on behalf of Stephen Hillier and Cathy Hughes respectively.
1.2 The Chair also commented that unfortunately David Way was still unwell and Jaine Clarke was covering the Director of Skills post in the interim. The Committee asked that their best wishes be passed onto David Way and they hoped he had a speedy recovery.

1.3 At the evaluation session held prior to the last meeting, the Committee had asked that future meetings be focused on how the Leitch Review was being taken forward. The Chair highlighted therefore that the theme of the meeting today was Leitch implementation.

**Item 2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

2.2 Madeleine Durie updated the Committee on actions from the last meeting, all of which had been completed:

- Para 1.5 Forward Plan and Leitch – The agenda for the meeting focused on Leitch implementation and agendas for future meetings would include Leitch updates.
- Para 5.2 Train to Gain – This is covered in the Learning and Skills Report.
- Para 5.3 Adult Learner Numbers – More information was provided in the Performance Report.

**Item 3. Update on Leitch Implementation**

3.1 Madeleine Durie made a presentation on progress so far on the implementation of the Leitch Review, which highlighted some of the key areas currently being considered by Ministers. It was expected that the formal Government response would be made in early June when the Implementation Plan would be published.

3.2 The Committee noted the update and in discussion the following comments were made.

- There was a question about the role of ‘middle-men’ before funding meets the learner. It was important that any interaction with learners and employers was appropriate to meet their needs – some of this may be face-to-face, some contact may take place online.
- There was concern that the CSR settlement would have implications for the Leitch ambition and that it was important from the LSC perspective to have targets that can be delivered, some of which may be below what had been set out in Leitch’s final report.
- The TUC was promoting the concept of the ‘pledge plus’ where employers would work with workforce representatives to work jointly on priorities.
- If we are to ensure more ‘economically valuable skills’, we will need to consider recognising employers’ qualifications. However, these must be quality assured and be portable.
- There are tensions between ensuring economically valuable skills and promoting social inclusion and some of the unintended consequences of
the Leitch report. Getting jobs may not be an outcome for some however promoting independence for some learners is important.

- There are concerns about vulnerable workers and need to review the impact of delivering health and safety training at full cost.

**Action: Jon Gamble**

3.3 The Chair thanked Madeleine for her presentation and members for their contributions.

**Item 4. Demand-Led Funding Consultation**

4.1 Madeleine Durie presented the initial results of the recent consultation on demand-led funding. The consultation had only recently ended so the findings of the consultation were still being analysed.

4.2 The presentation gave a summary of the type of respondents and an overview of the key messages from the consultation on the three models. A timetable for decisions was also circulated and it was anticipated that the demand-led funding systems would be implemented in the academic year 2008/09.

4.3 The Committee noted the update on the outcome of the recent consultation.

**Item 5. Employment and Skills**

5.1 Chris Barnham of the DfES made a presentation on the establishment of the Commission for Employment and Skills, highlighting what progress had been made as well as some of the key issues to be resolved.

5.2 The Chair thanked Chris for his progress update and called on the Committee to comment or raise questions. In discussion the following comments were made.

- How will the Commission engage with partners, nationally and locally – including the LSC?
- Leitch talks about the Commission licensing Employment and Skills Boards – will the implementation plan take this forward?
- Employment and Skills Boards are about strengthening the employer voice locally, however when they have been set up the membership is drawn from a wider range of partners.
- If the Commission is the voice of the learner which part of the system represents leaner demand?

5.3 In response Chris Barnham made the following comments.

- Work is being done with partners to go back to first principles on Employment and Skills Boards and look at the current models that exist already. It may be that an approach is taken where local partners determine their partnership and decide how they want to operate. Some may wish to consider a more formal approach with pooling of budgets. This is all under debate, however it is unlikely that there will be a national network with national criteria.
• Expect the Chair and the Commissioners to have a high level strategic and challenge role, with the Chief Executive focused on more operational issues such as management of SSCs. However a lot will depend on the Chair that is appointed.

• The Commission will need to maintain a dialogue with the LSC to ensure it fulfils its role effectively and there is no duplication. There are no proposals for it to oversee the LSC or Jobcentre Plus, however it will advise Ministers on employer demand.

**Item 6. Skills for Jobs**

6.1 Karen Riley presented her paper which presented progress on Skills for Jobs, which had first been discussed with the Committee in November last year.

6.2 The Committee noted the paper and made the following comments:

- there is a role for the voluntary sector and other providers, not just FE which must be recognised; and

- a link should be made to Apprenticeships.

6.3 The Chair thanked Karen for her paper and re-iterated the Committee’s strong support for the proposal.

**Item 7. Update on Non-Executive Changes and FE Bill**

7.1 Chris Banks joined the meeting and the Chair started the item by feeding back the discussions that took place at the evaluation session. The ALC had taken a pragmatic approach to the new non-executive changes and were not wedded to any particular structures. However they wanted to ensure that responsibility for adults remained a priority for the LSC. The focus should be on results and outcomes; structures were a means to an end.

7.2 Chris started by thanking the Committee for the contribution it has made to the work of the LSC and continues to make, despite the forthcoming changes. The LSC was reliant on members’ commitment to the LSC individually and as a group.

7.3 Chris then gave an update on the current thinking concerning new non-executive structures. Some Committees with a clearly-defined role would continue, such as Audit, Remuneration, Capital and Equality and Diversity, however there would be no other permanent standing committees. Where Council needed special advice on priority areas, groups would be pulled together as and when necessary. This would allow flexibility to widen membership from the current arrangements and to draw on particular experts as and when relevant. The idea of having a twice yearly opportunity for all partners and stakeholders to engage with the Chair and the Chief Executive on boarder priorities was also being considered.

7.4 In terms of the FE Bill, the timing of the second reading was later than expected however the plan was still to have it completed before the summer recess. Any delays would have big implications for local and regional Councils and would create a period of uncertainty.
7.5 The Chair thanked Chris for his input and asked the Committee for their comments and views which are summarised as follows.

- We need to consider achievements of adults and ensure they are skilled for the future, rather than a specific focus on targets.
- We would want to ensure that the strands of work that the Committee have been leading on are not lost. In particular the work on public services is now moving apace and showing real progress.
- There are a number of areas that the new groups will need to look at as a result of Leitch including Learner Accounts and the expansion of Train to Gain.
- A priority for the new structures will be to ensure there is no further decline in adult learner numbers.
- There is a need to add value as we move forward and ensure there is an understanding of all priorities and a clear sense of purpose.

7.6 The Chair thanked Chris for attending the meeting and commented that the Committee was supportive of his proposals and could see the value in having flexible structures. She was also pleased to see recognition of individual members’ contributions. Chris added that he hoped all would be clearer for the joint meeting July which he was due to attend.

Item 8. Learning and Skills Report

8.1 Jaine Clarke presented the Skills aspects of the report and highlighted the progress on Train to Gain, work on the Public Sector, Level 3 Trials, National Skills Academies and the New Standard. She drew particular attention to the action plan for Train to Gain mentioned in the report and promised to circulate this to members.

8.2 Jon Gamble commented for Learning Group and stated that work was being done to produce an Adult Learners Strategy which would articulate the ‘adult learner offer’. Working with partners, this would give a more sophisticated understanding of the offer and set out what it is in each of the regions.

8.3 The Committee noted the paper and made the following comments.

- Welcome the approach on an adult learner offer and it will be a culture change to look at this in a new way. The development of staff and providers will be a challenge.
- Pleased to see changes taking place on Train to Gain and the flexibility that this will bring.
- The work on the public sector had been hard and slow, however the first interim report was to be presented to the Public Sector Forum next month. The work of the LSC in making this happen was commended as real change was being secured.

8.4 The Chair thanked Jaine and Jon as well as the Committee for their comments.

Item 9. Performance Report
9.1 Jaine presented her paper which gave an update on performance against adult targets and programmes. The Committee noted the paper.

**Item 10. Any Other Business**

10.1 The Chair drew members’ attention to two papers that had been distributed for information with their packs. The first was on Offender Learning and Skills, and the second was on Adult Participation. Any queries or comments on these papers could be passed on to Jon Gamble for a response.

10.2 Committee members welcomed the paper on adult learner numbers which provided an extremely clear picture of the current situation.

**Meeting chair** Frances O'Grady

**Minute taker** Priya Gossain

**Date created** 2 May 2007

**Document ref.** \lsclocal\Sites$\CVH\Site\Organisational Data\Skills Group\Skills Strategy Unit\Adult Learning Committee\Meetings\2006\cho-adultlearningcommittee-minutes-26apr2007 DRAFT.doc