



**MINUTES OF THE STEERING GROUP MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 10AM (UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER)**

ATTENDEES

Professor Geoffrey Elliott (Chair)	Director of Lifelong Learning, University of Worcester
Mrs Debbie Lambert	Manager of the LLN for H&W
Mr Ian Peake	Principal, Herefordshire College of Technology
Mr Mike Rookes	Director, Open University (West Midlands)
Ms Gail Rothnie	Head of Outreach, University of Birmingham
Miss Donna Obrey (Secretary)	Project Officer for LLN for H&W

1. Apologies

Mr Chris Morecroft Principal, Worcester College of Technology

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record subject to an amendment to point 2 of the minutes that 'Skills for University' should be replaced with 'Skills4Uni'.

A written update on the matters arising was received. GE explained that the Work Based Learning Launch has been postponed as more development work is being undertaken. The date of the launch is to be advised.

3. Chair's Business

There was no chair's business.

4. Budget Update

The Group received a budget update. DO noted that this financial year the budget needs to be viewed in the context of the funding over the 3 year period as although it is predicting an under spend in 2008/9, a wider review is showing an over spend in the following financial year. It was agreed that overall the project is showing a manageable under spend over the 3 year period of funding.

DO advised the Group that there is currently £72,918 remaining to fund Capital however there are still some items of equipment that need to be purchased as part of the projects already approved. DL informed the Group that Capital funding would be discussed later in the meeting under Agenda Item 5.

5. Projects

Big Projects Bidding – Round Two

The 2nd round of bids for the Big Projects Fund are being invited for submission in November 2008. DL advised the Group that the LLN have allocated a further £100,000 to fund the next round of big projects which need to be submitted by Monday 3 November 2008.

The criteria remain the same as the previous round with the exception of Capital funding. If a project is incurring capital costs, this must be detailed on the bid form. The Steering Group agreed this would be a good use of capital funding.

In addition, all projects approved in this round will be on the condition that they are completed by December 2009.

The Steering Group approved the process and criteria for the 2nd Round of Big Projects Funding.

Projects for Approval

Production of Vocational Learning Guide for Hereford & Worcester

This is looking at producing a Vocational Learning Guide for Hereford & Worcester in the style of a traditional A to Z guide. A similar publication has been produced by the Birmingham & Black Country LLN.

Aimhigher have already undertaken most of the work involved in producing this, the funding is therefore requested to pay for the first print run. The Group approved the funding from the LSC Funding.

GE questioned whether this could also be made available via the website. DL confirmed that it would be made available under the Jobs & Careers section of Wider Horizons. It was also agreed that the paper version should make reference to it's location on Wider Horizons. This funding was approved.

Action: Bob Parker & Viv Bell to facilitate

Enhanced Induction for Top-Up Students from Animal Welfare & Management HND (Pershore College) to Animal Science BSc (Hons) (University of Worcester)

This project is aiming to improve the induction process for direct entry students entering the BSc (Hons) Animal Science. Although this project is very focussed on one course, DL explained that it could be used across other programmes.

It was felt that the term 'Learner Incompetence' used in the Background section of the project form should be amended to 'plagiarism'.

The funding was approved.

Action: BP to amend project form

Working with Unions to Promote HE/FE

The Steering Group were interested in this project but agreed that it needed to be more HE focussed.

GR informed the Group that Aimhigher had undertaken some similar work in the North and suggested that they could draw on their expertise and/or request a copy of their report.

The Group requested that some more development work was required before it could be reconsidered for approval.

Research into Demand for Taught Doctorates

Research will be undertaken to identify whether there is a demand for taught doctorates in vocational areas. It has always been an objective of the LLN to follow the vocational qualifications through to professional doctorates.

The research will investigate what is offered in the region and whether there is a demand.

This project funding was approved.

Investigate Feasibility of Dual Centre Based/Distant Learning AMSPAR Diploma

Phase 1 of this project is looking at investigating the demand for a distance learning AMSPAR Diploma course, the costs and skills required to develop this course. If Phase 1 shows positive results, Phase 2 of the project would then look to convert a course to distance learning, which is one of the targets of the LLN.

The Steering Group advised that if they are going to look to continue with the project, the bid form for Phase 2 would need to make explicit how this could be shared with others in the Network and ensure the course is at HE level.

The project funding was approved.

FD Counselling with Top-Up to BA/BSc Counselling

Following the feedback received from the Stakeholder Event for Counselling, funded by the LLN, it was decided that there is a demand for an FD in Counselling in Hereford with a Top-Up being delivered by the University of Worcester.

The Steering Group approved funding of £6,500 for the development of the 2 courses.

Collaborative Partnership to Design, Develop and Deliver a Certificate to Practise CBT for Low-Intensity Therapies Workers with Worcester College of Technology & Clarity eLearning & Training

Clarity Training, a private training provider, would like to work with WCT to produce a Certificate to Practice. The project would also involve working alongside the Strategic Health Authority.

The Steering Group were unclear whether this was a Certificate of Higher Education which would mean that it would carry academic credits to then continue on to a Top-Up degree course. The Group requested clarification on how the course will link in with the

HE framework. If it is going to link with a HE qualification the Group asked who is going to validate this.

As it was suggested that they may look to create a High-Intensity course afterwards, the Steering Group questioned why they aren't developing a Foundation Degree instead.

It was acknowledged that this was a rare example of a private training provider working in this sector and was therefore viewed as a positive collaboration.

Action: DL to seek clarification on queries raised and subsequently approve project funding upon receipt of satisfactory responses.

Interim Project Report

Using eNVQ to Deliver Apprenticeship Programmes and Work Based Learning - The Steering Group received an Interim Project Report for the project being undertaken by Evesham & Malvern Hills College and noted its achievements to date.

Project Closure Forms

The Steering Group received the Project Closure Forms for the following projects:

- Progression Survey of Level 3 NVQ Learners in Health & Social Care (Ludlow College) – received a total of 30 responses to the survey, currently awaiting final report of the findings.
Action: BP to chase the final report produced from this survey for the LLN website. BP & Liz Davies-Ward to disseminate the results as appropriate
- BA (Hons) Leadership & Management (University of Worcester) – the course has been validated and is recruiting from September 2009
- Patient Assessment DVD (West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust) – the DVD has been produced and a copy received by the LLN for their records.
Action: LDW to request an additional copy of the DVD for Gail Rothnie
- Tracking Lost Students (Worcester Sixth Form College) – the research has been completed and it was discovered that many of the students wanted to take a gap year and many said they were going to go to university the following year.
Action: BP to share the results of the research as appropriate
- Research into HE Course Choices of Level 3 Sports & Tourism Students (LLN) – four reports have been produced detailing the HE requirements of Level 3 Sports students and Travel & Tourism students. Surveys were completed by students and their lecturers.
Action: Reports to be published on LLN website and disseminated as appropriate by Colin Wood

6. Monitoring Report for HEFCE (Draft)

All LLNs are now required to submit their annual monitoring report using a standard template at the same time each year. The current report is due to be submitted at the end of October.

DL ran through the format of the report, with its content to date, with the Steering Group in preparation for approval of the final report.

The Steering Group thanked Debbie for her work on the monitoring report.

Action: DL to post final report to the Steering Group for approval

7. Proposal for West Midlands Project

A proposal was presented to the Steering Group for authorisation to contribute £3,500 towards a regional West Midlands Employer Engagement Bid being submitted to HEFCE. The bid is being submitted collaboratively between the 4 West Midlands LLN.

DL explained that if the bid is successful, this would be one source of funding to help continue the activities of the LLN.

Although it was felt that the Colleges would continue to have their own Employer Liaison staff, it was acknowledged that this kind of collaboration would result in an improved portfolio which would be taken out to employers.

The Steering Group approved this initial funding required to contribute towards the cost of the consultant to write the bid.

8. Proposal for HE in Herefordshire Conference

DL informed the Group that this event is now being referred to as a seminar rather than a conference. The seminar is being organised in conjunction with Herefordshire Council and is being held at Herefordshire College of Technology on Friday 14 November 2008.

Andrew Corcoran has now completed his research into the Market Needs Analysis of Herefordshire and is in the process of writing up the research.

The Group approved to fund the seminar up to £3,850.

9. Revised Delivery Plan for 2009

The Group noted that the Targets for 2009 have been updated plus a number of amendments have been made to the outcomes and outputs in the delivery plan.

10. Report on Work in Progress

The Group received the LLN Team's Work in Progress updates and authorised Viv Bell's proposal to use the same principles as last year with regards to e-Learning project funding in 2008/9 (i.e. allow one bid to be submitted by each institution to a maximum value of £5,000).

11. Update on Progression Agreements

The Group receive a paper detailing the progression agreements that are anticipated to be completed by the end of October.

12. Update on Aimhigher Activities

GE provided an update on Aimhigher. Phase 3 Aimhigher has been approved by HEFCE with no amendments and the first Steering Group meeting is in the process of being convened – they now have a more narrow focus.

Aimhigher are recruiting Aimhigher Associates who will be working with schools in a mentoring/advising capacity. All Aimhigher Associates will be paid and will go through a training programme.

13. Any Other Business

DL tabled the draft agenda for the LLN's 2nd Annual Conference which is scheduled for Wednesday 19 November 2008. DL explained that the format of the conference was to have a keynote speaker, 6 updates from LLN funded projects and 4 workshops (each run twice). It was recommended by the Steering Group that the project updates be made as creative as possible and should include the learners describing what positive impact the projects have had on learners.

IP advised the Group that the National Annual Conference for Principals is also taking place on this date, it was therefore suggested that the LLN look to review the date of their conference.

Action: DL/DO to investigate an alternative date for the 2nd Annual Conference