



**MINUTES OF THE STEERING GROUP MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2010 AT 2PM (UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER)**

ATTENDEES

Professor Geoffrey Elliott (Chair)	Director of Regional Engagement, University of Worcester
Mrs Debbie Lambert	Manager, LLN for Herefordshire & Worcestershire
Mr Stuart Laverick	Principal, Worcester College of Technology
Mr Ian Peake	Principal, Herefordshire College of Technology
Mr Mike Rookes	Director, Open University (West Midlands)
Mrs Gail Rothnie	Head of Outreach, University of Birmingham
Miss Donna Obrey (Secretary)	Project Officer, LLN for Herefordshire & Worcestershire

1. Apologies

None.

2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record and the Group noted that all of the actions from the previous meeting had been completed.

3. Chair's Business

There was no chair's business.

4. Budget Update

DO provided an update on the budget and advised that the carry forward figures presented to the last meeting had been revised by Finance in the LLN's favour. Therefore the budget for 2010/2011 is £390,498 (including capital), this is the sum of the carry forwards from 2009/2010 and no further funding will be received from HEFCE.

Taking into account committed and projected expenditure, the LLN is currently anticipating an underspend of £9,920. DO proposed that the balance remaining be kept as a contingency for any unplanned costs as there was no longer an allocation in the budget for this, the Group were happy with this suggestion.

DL highlighted to the Group the new Delivery Plan which will see the LLN through its transition to the Regional Engagement Team. DL clarified that she had received written confirmation from HEFCE that they will not take back any money unspent by 31 December 2010, as there are still a number of commitments due for payment after this date.

The Group approved the plans.

5. Projects

The Group noted the Project Tracking Sheet and Project Funding by Institution Summary.

Project Approved by Chair's Action

Transforming Teaching & Learning through eLearning

Following email correspondence since the previous meeting, this project was approved. However, DL advised the Group that since approval Derek Street had left South Worcestershire College which meant they were no longer able to lead on this project. Peter Kilcoyne (WCT) had therefore offered to take on this project and has confirmed that he will involve the other colleges. The Group endorsed the decision made by Chair's Action to transfer this project and funding to WCT.

Project Closure Forms

DL provided a verbal summary of the Project Closure Forms for those projects that have completed since the previous meeting.

The Group were happy for GE to receive all future Project Closure Forms on their behalf but were still happy to be involved in any decisions if consultation is required.

6. Draft Evaluation Report

The Group discussed the first draft of the Evaluation Report which is due to be submitted by the end of December 2010. DL explained that there was no template for this report, she had therefore taken the approach of going back to the original aims and principles of the HWLLN.

GE stated that it was a good, clear, well structured report, it was felt to be factual and provided good evidence of the achievements of the HWLLN. GE opened discussion by highlighting the number of students who have benefited from LLN funding particularly through curriculum development.

SL questioned whether there was any notion of how those learners fit with the WP agenda. GR confirmed that this was never a focus of the LLNs and would be difficult to obtain the information. It was however noted that the progression of vocational students into HE and the strong focus of the LLN on part-time students in work is central to some partners' WP strategies. The Group agreed it would be a good idea to look at how many of the students were on courses being delivered at partner colleges.

IP added that he felt it was important to focus on what you have got that you didn't have before the LLN started (i.e. the students, the curriculum, the benefits of working together). SL and IP agreed that the LLN had been key in enabling more students to study HE from non-traditional backgrounds.

GE questioned where this report should be presented within the University of Worcester. It was agreed to submit this to the Externally Provided Programmes Sub Committee (EPPSC) which would be fed through AQSC and on to Academic Board. The Group felt that a single page Executive Summary would be more beneficial to be appended to the full report.

DL to circulate a full copy of the final report to each of the partners together with a covering letter with a particular thank you to those institutions who have formed part of the Steering Group.

IP expressed how useful he had found it to be part of the Steering Group and suggested a universities and colleges committee be formed that could be held twice a year to include Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

GE formally thanked DL and the LLN team for the report.

ACTION: DL to produce an Executive Summary for submission to the EPPSC

ACTION: DL to circulate a full copy of the final report to each of the partners together with a covering letter

7. Executive Summary of SQW's Report

The Group received the Executive Summary of SQW's report.

GE provided an update on paragraph 73, bullet 4. The Further Education Research Association (FERA) has been awarded funding by the LLN forum to improve their website in order to accommodate the research of the LLNs. This means that all LLN research will be stored in a central place and be made accessible for the next 5 years.

ACTION: DO to ensure HWLLNs research is posted to this website when live

ACTION: DO to advise the Steering Group of the location of the content repository and the access key

8. Wider Horizons Embedding Paper

The Group received the paper explaining the plan for embedding Wider Horizons in to the University of Worcester, and the budget for undertaking this work. UW are looking at ways in which it could be improved and are planning to link it in with the Worcester Library. The Group welcomed this and agreed this was a good example of sustainability.

9. Any Other Business

DL thanked all of the Steering Group for their participation over the past 4 years and GE added a further thank you to their institutions for enabling them to participate.

Looking Ahead at the HE Landscape

The Group had a lengthy discussion around the future of HE and its impact on their institutions.