

3. Chair's Business

There was no chair's business.

4. Budget Update

The updated budget was presented and it was confirmed that the budget shown included the carry forward from the previous financial year (2006/2007). An allocation of £140,000 has already been committed in the budget to fund projects over the forthcoming year, this has been split across the 5 areas (i.e. Learner Support, ICT, Leadership & Management, Health & Social Care and Sport, Heritage, Media & Culture).

It is currently not clear whether funding will continue after the 3 year period of the LLN project. GE suggested that the staff contracts are reviewed one year prior to their expiry. DL reported that at the HEFCE visit, they commented that it would be a shame if the LLN's disappeared and hoped that they could continue in some form.

GE confirmed that the LLN is trying to build sustainability in to the projects that are being funded by asking partners to take ownership of these after the 3 years. DL also advised that the LLN are endeavouring to spread the funding around all of the LLN's partners.

5. Projects

A chart was provided to show the projects approved to date together with details of the partners involved. It was noted that project bids had not yet been submitted by the following partners:

- Evesham & Malvern Hills College – submitted bid for consideration at this meeting
- Hereford College of Arts – DL to arrange a meeting with HCA to discuss
- Hereford Sixth Form College – to consider the possibility of an e-Learning Project
- Royal National College for the Blind – submitted bid for consideration at this meeting
- Worcester Sixth Form College – submitted for consideration at this meeting

Projects for Approval at this Meeting

Using ENVQs to Deliver Apprenticeship Programmes & Work Based Learning (Evesham & Malvern Hills College)

DL reported that it was felt by the Leadership & Management Advisory Group that this project could not be counted towards the Leadership & Management strand. However a proposal is being put forward at the e-Learning Conference on 25 September to suggest that the money currently allocated to a 'Content Developer' should be used instead to provide each FE College within the network with £5,000 to spend on a project. It was therefore suggested that Evesham & Malvern Hills College could use their funding for this project.

However, after consideration, the Steering Group felt that the project needed to be more explicit in linking to higher education and that the bid should be reworked so that the system being developed can take students through an assessment mechanism that identifies their readiness to progress on to higher education. It was also felt that the bid covered quite a broad area and should be more focussed on a particular area.

Redesign of the Foundation Degree in Health & Social Care (Ludlow College, Herefordshire College of Technology & UW)

It was proposed that funding is provided to allow the FD in Health & Social Care to be redesigned as it failed to recruit at Ludlow College last year and at HCT this year. The Steering Group discussed and approved the funding of £5,000.

Workforce Deanery Project: Skills for Health: A Stepped Approach to Learning (NHS West Midlands)

This project is looking at developing additional modules which it was noted, is one of the LLN's targets plus it had the added value of involving the Skills Councils, employers and the NHS. A total of £2,500 was approved to fund this project.

Local Gastronomy Programme – A feasibility Study (Bulmer Foundation)

The project bid was discussed at length and it was decided that it was not possible to approve the bid at this stage. The Group were unclear what level it was focussed on and it was suggested that they look at links with other institutions doing similar programmes.

Mapping Micro-HE Provision in Herefordshire (Bulmer Foundation)

Following discussion, there were concerns that the provision was not specifically focussed on HE. The Group were unable to approve the funding for this project at this time as it was felt that there was insufficient evidence that there are micro-providers of accredited HE in the county.

Professional Programme (Worcester Sixth Form College)

Following discussion, the Steering Group made the following suggestions for how they would like to see the project be developed; they would either like to see:

- an explicit assessment which identifies a students' readiness for higher education together with the requirement for an assignment undertaken as part of an accredited study skills module.
- an exemplar tutorial programme designed to equip BTEC students with the skills and confidence to apply for higher education, as a targeted intervention programme or enhanced mentoring.

Moodle – Developing an Inclusive Online Learning Environment (Royal National College for the Blind)

The total funding of £6,000 was approved to fund this project (this will be part funded by the Wider Horizons funding already approved by the Steering Group). The Steering Group were happy to support the bid on the condition that this was made accessible to other FE Colleges with visually impaired students undertaking HE courses.

Accreditation of Module from The Leadership Trust Foundation (UW)

The Steering Group felt this project progressed the Leadership & Management strand considerably and approved a contribution of £3,500 towards the project.

Action: DL to provide feedback to partners regarding projects discussed at this meeting

Report from LLN Funded Projects

Research in to Barriers to Progression from Level 3 to Level 4 – First Draft (NEW College)

The first draft of this research was circulated to the Steering Group prior to the meeting. The main findings of this research, which investigated the number of Level 3 students progressing on the Level 4 courses, were:

- 43.5% of Level 3 students were continuing on to Level 4 courses
- 43.5% of Level 3 students were not continuing on to Level 4 courses
- 13% of Level 3 students were still unsure whether they would be continuing on to Level 4 courses

- 85% of those going on to HE were going to do so the following Academic Year
- 39% of those going on to HE were continuing at NEW College
- The top 2 subject areas that students advised they were progressing on to were Art & Design (24%) and Nursing & Midwifery (18%)

- 52% of those students who were not going on to HE said this was either because 'I want to get a full-time job' or 'I have already secured a full-time job'

DL advised the group that this research will be undertaken on a larger scale in the forthcoming year and will be led by Bob Parker (Progression & Learner Support Co-ordinator). CM suggested that future research should include a question to identify whether those students continuing on to HE were doing so on a full-time or part-time basis. The Group agreed that this would be useful information to obtain.

Action: BP to ensure this question is included in future research in to progression

As part of this survey, students were given the option to provide their contact details on the understanding that they may be contacted for research purposes in the future. Those students that chose to provide their contact details were entered in to a free prize draw to win an iPod nano. The Steering Group randomly selected the winner – Dan Ashforth.

Action: DL to contact NEW College to check regarding publicity for the prize winner.

6. Report on Work in Progress

e-Learning Conference: Viv Bell has organised an e-learning conference which is taking place on 25 September 2007 and has 27 delegates registered to date. It is proposed that the salary of the content developer for 2007/2008 be used to fund one e-learning development project at each college - £5,000 per college. It was confirmed that a Project Proposal would still need to be approved for each partner, by to the Steering Group, in order to allocate the funding.

Leadership & Management Advisory Group: The first meeting of the Leadership & Management Advisory Group took place on 11 September.

LLN for H&W Annual Conference: The LLN's Annual Conference has been scheduled for Friday 30 November. The morning of the conference will feature keynote speakers (Kevin Whitstone – HEFCE, David Cragg – LSC, Penny Blackie – Foundation Degree Forward, Taymar Thompson – Herefordshire PCT (to be confirmed)). The afternoon will focus on workshops for each of the strands.

Seminar for Admissions Tutors: Liz Davies-Ward will help lead a seminar for Admissions Tutors in the region for all FE and HEIs to make sure that they understand vocational qualifications. This will initially focus on Health.

Action: LD-W to liaise with Gail Rothnie re hosting this event at the University of Birmingham

Student Support: Bob Parker is planning to organise a collaborative meeting about student support as it has been reported that there is currently no forum whereby the relevant staff at each partner can communicate with each other.

Progression Agreements: Bob has produced a first draft of a progression agreement.

3 Counties PDP: Viv Bell has uploaded these files on to the website.

Wider Horizons: Viv Bell will attend the next Steering Group Meeting to present the first prototype of the Wider Horizons system. The work packages detailed in the papers are all being undertaken by Kidderminster College which will mean that the funding will go to one of the members of the network rather than having to find an external resource. A visit to the University of Hull is currently being planned by some members of the Wider Horizons team.

JISC Bid: Viv is currently investigating the possibility of a joint proposal to JISC for funding of a social networking pilot.

Mobile Technology Project: This will be discussed at the next OOE Executive Group Meeting.

7. To Receive the Initial Report of a Survey of all LLN's Involvement with Sector Skills Councils

This report was circulated to the Steering Group for information. This shows that the LLN now has links with Skills for Health and Skills for Care.

8. Update on Aimhigher Activities

Aimhigher have made a significant appointment to the post of Assistant Area Co-ordinator – Helen Dowdeswell. She has a lot of experience and previously worked at Stourbridge College. Helen will be supporting partners in their delivery with a specific focus on impact assessment.

9. Any Other Business

A possible project was briefly discussed for WCT which would involve providing funding to assist with uploading materials on to Moodle for an IPP course.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Item No	Action	By Whom
5	Provide feedback to partners re. projects discussed at the meeting	DL
5	Contact NEW College regarding publicity for Prize Draw	DL
5	Ensure mode of study question is included in future progression research	BP
6	Liaise with Gail Rothnie re. hosting Seminar for Admissions Tutors at University of Birmingham	LD-W