

Notes

Operational Sub-group

Date	3 Sept 2010	Venue	London Councils
Meeting Chair	Mary Vine-Morris		
Contact Officer:	Jonathan Rallings		
Telephone:	020 7934 9524	Email:	Jonathan.rallings@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Attendees

Mary Vine-Morris (MVM)	RPG (Chair)
Nick Brenton (NB)	ALDCS
Yolande Burgess (YB)	RPG
Steve Cameron (SC)	Newham
Wendy Forrest (WF)	Tower Hamlets
Jennefer Holmes (JH)	LSEB
Colin Jones (CJ)	LDA
Mike Pettifer (MP)	YPLA
Jonathan Rallings (JR)	RPG
Helen Richardson (HR)	Barking & Dagenham

Apologies

Helen McNulty	Learning Trust
Sue Snowdon	Redbridge

Introductions

MVM welcomed Jennefer Holmes from the GLA, who will now represent the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB) on OSG. JH explained that the previous LSEB secretariat had been disbanded and this function was now conducted 'in-house' by the London Development Agency (LDA) (managed by Stephen Evans).

Item 1. Notes of the last meeting and action points

- 1.1 The notes of the last meeting were accepted.
- 1.2 Action points and Matters arising:
 - Action 35: CJ advised that the London ESF strategy would be launched at the LDA Learning & Skills Commissioning Event which will take place on 10 September 2010 – RPG/LDA will be jointly represented in the ESF Youth Programme section. The Mayor's office will be conducting ESF awards on 10 November 2010. **Action 35 closed**
 - Action 37: At the 14-19 Leads event in July, boroughs were invited to nominate representatives to sit on OSG. Nine nominations have been received to fill five places; therefore RPG will be approaching the emerging sub-regional clusters to select their preferred nominee.
 - Action 39: The Disputes Panel paper has been updated to reflect OSG comments in June, but this work is currently on hold until there is more detail about the new arrangements for funding and commissioning, as the panel may no longer be required.

- Action 42: The Regional Statement of Priorities for 2010 has been re-drafted following the withdrawal of the National Commissioning Framework and will be discussed at the RPG Board meeting on 20 September.
- Action 44: Completed. **Action 44 closed**

Item 2. LA & RPG position following 20 July announcements

- 2.1 MP stated that the YPLA is restructuring to provide more resource to support 'converter' academies. MP noted that schools can convert mid-term during the autumn and then at the beginning of the spring and summer terms; previously schools could only change status at the beginning of an academic year. It was also noted that the clause to provide impartial advice and guidance had been removed from the Academies Act.
- 2.2 YB reminded the group that none of the legislative 16-19 reforms in the Academies, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009 have been changed. It is expected that the new government will still want to aim for full participation post-16, although it is likely there will be no compulsion. NB cautioned that there will be a Repeals Act which may contain proposals to reverse legislation.
- 2.3 WF mentioned that a Work-based Learning group in Tower Hamlets is proposing to establish a 16-19 College under the Free Schools programme. The New Schools Network has been initially supportive of this move.
- 2.4 MVM questioned how long Free Schools will receive 'new' funding for and speculated that they are likely to draw on the existing schools revenue budget at some point. MP agreed that the quantum of funding is likely to be spread more thinly.
- 2.5 MVM reported that Frankie Sulke had been appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Group's task and finish team that will consider LA commissioning. MVM noted the seeming inconsistency in language in messages reaching providers and local authorities (devolving responsibility to frontline professionals, provider autonomy – crucial local authority strategic commissioning role); this might reflect a desire for a market-led system with some degree of local regulation. There is particular concern about the proposed lagged funding system not taking into account the quality of provision, and also questions about how new providers would be enabled to enter the market under a lagged funding system.
- 2.6 SC asked what local authorities position is with 14-19 staff. YB stated that there appears to have been a mixed response to the July announcement in relation to staff, with one borough alerting staff to possible redundancies (under Section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 arrangements) almost immediately after the announcement, although there were wider factors in play in the borough at that time. Many boroughs are working through the need for team members to take a more strategic approach to provider relationships and most are following REACT's advice to wait and consider the implications and the effect on staffing when more information becomes available. MVM noted that she understood unions are raising the issue of the previous administrations commitment to 3-year funding for transferred posts through the Special Purpose Grant.
- 2.7 WF commented that continued regional collaboration was important. University Technical Colleges, CEIAG and the National Citizenship Service were all issues London as a region should have a view on.
- 2.8 The group noted the following key concerns in relation to post-16 commissioning:
 - Commissioning decisions must be made by local authorities not YPLA. MP advised that YPLA supports this position.

- There needs to be clarification on the scope of lagged funding and a strong argument needs to be made to ensure the quality of provision is considered, particularly where learners numbers are increasing. Minimum Levels of Performance should be regionally sensitive to raise the bar for all providers.
- 2.9 It is hoped that some of these details may emerge in October through the Education and Children's Bill, the Spending Review, and the Public Bodies Reform Bill. MVM pointed out that regardless of these concerns local authorities are still charged with the statutory responsibilities detailed in the ASCL Act 2009 and need to maintain a strong presence with local providers.

Item 3. Young People with Learning Difficulty and/or Disability Proposals for London

- 3.1 YB reported that a draft paper on the leadership and management of procedures and budgets for young people with LLDD was being prepared by the LLDD working group with a view to it being presented to ALDCS. The paper will put forward proposals to aid London's local authorities in the delivery of their current statutory duties and help them prepare for the handover of further responsibilities for 16-25 year old young people with LDD in 2012/13, including options for sub-regional and regional management.
- 3.2 SC felt that something needed to be done about ALS, including 19-24, and MP agreed that this funding stream needed to be brought together with SEN block grant and the LLDD Placements Budget.

Action 45: YB/Helen McNulty to bring LLDD proposals to next OSG

Item 4. Agenda for RPG Meeting – 20 September

- 4.1 The group agreed the agenda for the RPG meeting.

Item 5. RPG Workplan Monitoring

- 5.1 *ESF*: The SFA has issued a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) which closes on the 17 September. Providers must register via the PQQ to be invited to tender. Local authorities need to alert local providers to the PQQ.

Action 46: MVM to highlight to Local Authorities

- 5.2 *Data*: Feedback has been provided on the Strategic Analysis. RPG officers have met with the GLA's DMAG team to discuss the first set of 16-18 projections. YPLA is working on an IT platform for local authorities to access data from desktops rather than having to use the hot-desk facilities at Sanctuary Buildings.
- 5.3 *Achieving Excellence*: YB noted the current policy gap around CEIAG. Work is underway to establish the commissioning options for CHOICE post-March 201; this includes finalising the CHOICE evaluation undertaken by LSN.
- 5.4 *RAG*: Friday 24 September is the next 14-19 Leads/RAG meeting. Frankie Sulke will be addressing the group and leading a discussion on local authorities 'strategic' commissioning role.

Item 6. AOB

- 6.1 Subsequent to local authorities expressing a preference to *not* proceed to contract for Young Entrepreneurship activity, the tender has been withdrawn and bidding organisations have been notified. MVM noted that this was disappointing particularly in light of substantial cash leverage the tender required; however the majority preference from local authorities was understandable in the present financial climate.

Date of next meeting: 1 October, 10-12.30, London Councils