Cross Party Group on Skills

Minutes (Draft) of the meeting held at 12.45 p.m. Thursday, 8 May, 2014

Committee Room 2

The Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh

Apologies	Present
- Fiona Stewart – SDS - Anne Meikle – EDAS & WES - Polly Purvis – Scotland IS - Joanne McManus – ICS - Shona Struthers – Colleges Scotland - David Lonsdale – Scottish Retail Consortium - John McKinney - FSS - Aileen Ponton – SCQF Partnership - Joe Wilson, The Scottish Qualifications Authority - Peter Kormylo, Education Scotland - Irene Bell – EDAS	- Gavin Brown MSP (Co-Convener) - Anthony O'Reilly(Secretary) - Ian McCulloch, Independent Training Consultants Ltd - James Harrison, Universities Scotland - Anne Galbraith, SECTT - Baljinder Birdi, Pearson Workbased Learning - Ian Stirrat, SELECT - Peter Cannell, Open University - Sandy Burgess – The Institute of the Motor Industry - Kate Sankey, LLTNP - Martyn Ware, SQA - George Brown, SQA - Simon Williams, NHS Education for Scotland - Kate Still, Rathbone Training - Colin Dalrymple, Scottish Training Federation - Jay Smith, Employment Enterprise - Margaret McDougall, MSP - Marco Biagi, MSP - Wendy Burton, Scottish Unionlearning/STUC - Keith Falconer, Skills Development Scotland - Rebecca Marek, Scottish Youth Parliament - Margaret McCulloch, MSP (Co-Convener)

1. **Agenda Item 1**

   Welcome

1.1 Gavin Brown MSP as Co-Convenor opened the Annual General Meeting and welcomed members, especially Patricia Chambers who would now be supporting the group.   Mr Brown thanked Jenny Duncan, who was stepping down from the role. He presented her with a gift as a token of appreciation for all her hard work in the past.

2. **Agenda Item 2**

   Apologies

2.1 Mr Brown noted a number of apologies from Members.

3. **Agenda Item 3**

   AGM

 3.1 The Secretary asked the group if there were any nominations for the post of Co-Convenor. Margaret McDougall, MSP nominated Gavin Brown, MSP and Margaret McCulloch, MSP. This was seconded by Colin Dalrymple of STF and carried unanimously.

3.2 The following organisations were proposed for membership of the CPG:

- Scottish Chamber of Commerce – Charandeep Singh

- Women's Enterprise Scotland – Anne Meikle

3.3 As there was no further business for the AGM, Mr Brown formally closed the meeting and handed the Chair to Margaret McCulloch, MSP.

Before commencing with the normal business of the meeting Ms McCulloch took the opportunity to thank the meeting's lunch sponsor, SQA for their sponsorship. Ms McCulloch informed the group that discussions had taken place with the caterers and a decision had been made to try some different lunch options and she asked the group for feedback on this.

Peter Cannell from Open University and Martyn Ware from SQA were then invited to address the group.

4. **Presentations**

Peter Cannell opened the presentation by giving an overview on widening access emphasising that there was a shift to working with partners to support routes from informal to formal learning. The main points of the presentation were:

- It is problematic to conflate all online resources; there are multiple dimensions of openness and accessibility

- The promise of Open Education Resources remains largely unfulfilled

- Understanding of OER is changing; a broader definition is emerging that encompasses all activities that open up access to educational opportunities in a context where freely available online content and services are taken as the norm.

- Rural Entrepreneurship in Scotland and Labspace were shown as two examples of OER's produced in Scotland and these examples were helping to develop practice in social partnerships and networks and also widening access to supportive high quality resources at national scale.

- Attention was drawn to a new project being led by the OU in Scotland aimed at supporting development. Main focus will be around developments in practice, a state of the art hub for OER and development of new content. The project would aim to put Scottish HE at the forefront of new developments.

Martyn Ware then continued on the theme of Open Education talking about the Government aspiration for a smarter Scotland. The main points covered included:

- Milestones in OER such as the Open Content Initiative (1998), UNESCO conference (2000), Cape Town Open Educational Declaration (2007), JORUM UK Open Repository for Learning Materials (2010) and in 2012 Dawn of Age of MOOCs.

- Information on the Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources and MERLOT, the website for Muliimedia Educational Resource for Learning and online Teaching

- An introduction to 'Commons' – a network for sharing OER resources and discussion as well as other websites such as the OpenCourseWare Consortium and Jorum

- An outline of Open Education developments in Scotland including Edinburgh Napier University's 3E framework, Glasgow Caledonian University Library OER Guidelines, Open Badges for Scottish Education and the Learning Resource Metadata Initiative

- Attention was also drawn to the Scottish Open Education Declaration which is available at http://declaration.openscot.net/

- Second Open Scotland event, hosted by the ALT Scotland SIG, University of Edinburgh on 3 June 2014

The presentation concluded with some information on how members could get involved, including keeping an eye on the OU blog and volunteering a post, commenting on the Scottish Open Education declaration and following the #OpenScot hashtag on Twitter.

4.1 Ms McCulloch thanked the presenters again and invited questions or comments from members.

4.2 Colin Dalrymple commented that we are in danger of creating more social exclusion than inclusion for young people and that there were lessons to be learnt. He observed that both presenters referred to 'older' people yet the most successful developments are those for the young. He went on to say that young people should have access to

OpenResources just as much as older people and he hoped OU and SQA would consider this.

4.3 Jay Smith from Employment Enterprise asked how digital technology could enhance Open Resources and Wider Access and what plans there were to extend this

4.4 Kate Still from Rathbone endorsed the point made by Colin of STF regarding the need for an inclusive approach to learning from a young age. The point was made that many young people that Rathbone deal with come from the more disadvantaged areas and have not had a good experience of the formal education process and are therefore disinclined to learn through traditional methods – an open learning approach is potentially a new way of engaging more young people and encouraging learning as a positive experience.

4.5 In reply, Martyn Ware agreed with the points made and said that these inform the national discussion. He pointed out that most examples come from Higher Education but this might be because this is where most innovation happens. He acknowledged that there is plenty of potential for this in schools, using GLOW as an example. He went on to say that Open Badges for young people was a way of breaking down learning into manageable chunks to make them more appealing to young people.

4.6 Peter Cannell also replied saying they were piloting some new projects about enhancing the curriculum but need to look beyond the UK and Europe for best practice. He stated that South Africa is a really good example of how digital learning can be made accessible and here in Scotland we can build on simple forms of assessment to make badges worth something.

4.7 Ms McCulloch thanked both presenters again.

5. Agenda Item 5

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

5.1 The minutes from the meeting on 27 February 2014 were adopted as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

6 Agenda Item 6

Dates of future meetings and presenters

6.1 Ms McCulloch informed members of dates of the next four meetings of the group and details of members who had agreed to present and sponsor lunch at these meetings as follows:

Thurs 9 October 2014	Scottish Training Federation Confirmed	Challenges facing training providers in delivering Scottish Government target of 25,000 Modern Apprenticeships in addition to provision of quality training for those embarking on Employability Fund programmes
Thurs 27 November	Institute of the Motor Industry	The Motor industry 'Return on Investment' calculator

2014	Confirmed	
Thurs 5 February 2015	Volunteer Development Scotland To be confirmed	The role of volunteering in developing skills to bring sustainable economic benefits?
Thurs 7 May 2015	Opito Confirmed	Oil and Gas industry collaboration on Labour Market information

6.2 Ms McCulloch asked members to comment on timing of meetings and whether or not members would prefer evening meetings or meetings on a different day of the week. The consensus was to maintain the status quo.

6.3 Ms McCulloch suggested for future meetings name cards were supplied for members to write their details on so that everyone knew who other members were. This suggestion was welcomed by members present.

7. Close of meeting

7.1 With no further business to conduct Ms McCulloch thanked everyone for their ongoing support, reminding members that the CPG was their group and if they had any suggestions for the format or agenda items for future meetings they should let them be known.