

Minutes of Meeting 28th June 2011

Cross Party Group on Skills

Date: 28th June 2011
 Location: Holyrood, Committee Room 2
 Present:

Alliance of Sector Skills Councils	Iain McCaskey	NHS Education for Scotland	Simon Williams
Barnardos Scotland	Helen Brown	NSCC	John McKinney
Big Lottery	Gillian Miller	OPITO	Gillian Black
Bio Reliance	Louise Rice	Rathbone	Jim Murphy
Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland	Shona Matthews	Scotland IS	Polly Purvis
Creative Scotland	Helen Ward	Scottish Conservative Party	Gavin Brown MSP
Economic Development Association [Scotland]	Anne Meikle, Irene Bell	Scottish Enterprise	Brian McLesih
Federation of Small Businesses	Mary Goodman	Scottish Labour Party	John Park MSP
Investors in People	Vicki Maclean	Scottish National Party	Paul Wheelhouse
IRISS	Sarah Cockburn	SQA	Doreen Kedzierska
Learning Link Scotland	Susan Walls	STUC	Helen Martin
Learning & Skills Improvement Service	Marian Healy	Skills Development Scotland	Fiona Stewart
Learning Teaching Scotland	Jim Lally	Unite the Union	Walton Pantland
Loch Lomond & Trossachs Community Partnership	Ron Dalton / Kate Sankey	Universities Scotland	James Wilson

Apologies received:

A4E	Gerry Croall	Learning Teaching Scotland	Alan Runcie
Alliance of Sector Skills Councils	Jacqui Hepburn	Pearson [edexcel]	John Dick
Association of Accounting Technicians	Helen McGougan	ProSkills	Linda McCourt
BT Openreach	Suzanne Hester	SCQF	Aileen Ponton
Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland	Simon Thompson	SECTT	Anne Galbraith
Cogent SSC	Paul Coffey	SIO	Alan Thornborrow
Construction Skills Scotland	Graeme Ogilvy	Scottish Labour Party	Rhoda Grant MSP
Go Skills	Stuart McKenna	SQA	George Brown
ICS Learn	Joanne McManus	Scottish Renewables Forum	Joss Blamire
Improve	Kelvin Thomson	Skills for Logistics	Chris Campbell
Institute of Physics	Alison McLure	OU Scotland	Una Bartley
Lantra	Willie Fergusson	The Scotch Whisky Association	Julia Heskith-Laird



Agenda Items:

1 Welcome:

John Park MSP [JP] welcomed everyone and introduced himself, giving some background to the original work of the Cross Party Group for those new. It was explained why and how the CPG was to be re-registered in parliament and JP quickly moved to the formal process of nominating and electing office bearers.

2 Election of Office Bearers

2.1 JP explained that it was proposed to continue with the model of co-convenors rather than convenor and deputy. Shona Matthews of the Chartered Banker Institute proposed John Park MSP and Gavin Brown MSP for the roles of co-convenors. This was seconded by Ron Dalton of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs Partnership and carried by unanimous vote.

2.2 JP then nominated that Shona Matthews continue as Secretary to the Group. This was seconded by Gavin Brown and carried by unanimous vote.

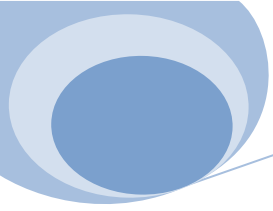
2.3 It was explained that those attending, and those that had submitted apologies, would form the initial membership of the CPG. However JP stressed that suggestions for new members were always welcomed and should anyone have such suggestions to contact his office or Shona Matthews. JP also provided a little more information about the MSPs that were in attendance and Paul Wheelhouse also gave a brief background about himself.

3 Workplan and Future Meetings

Both John and Gavin expressed their gratitude to be back convening the Group and formally welcomed familiar faces and new members. JP encouraged all members to participate and to voice concerns and opinions. With the new government taking shape, summer offered the opportunity for the group to work through ideas and to outline and prioritise a workplan and views were sought from around the table.

3.1 Ron Dalton [Loch Lomond & Trossachs Partnership] noted that when the group was first convened the initial focus had been on the Apprenticeship Bill. JP noted this and agreed to come back to this point later.

3.2 John McKinney [NSCC] expressed concern regarding the weighted funding mechanism used for colleges which did not accurately reflect the variation in costs incurred by the college. This could result in expensive courses such as construction being dropped by colleges as they reviewed the courses offered, despite significant investment.



3.3 Marion Healy [Learning& Skills Improvement Service] referred to the National Occupational Standards noted work undertaken by the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils which could provide a useful reference document of value to members.

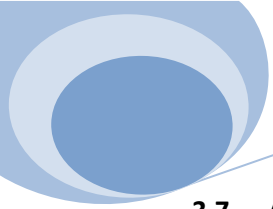
3.4 Fiona Stewart [SDS] wished to respond to Mr McKinney's earlier point to clarify that apprenticeships are not linked to sums funding. This is due to the students employed status and was therefore unsure if there was a related issue. It seemed from vies around the table however, that this is not the general understanding. Mr McKinney said that the Scottish Funding Council was currently reviewing college funding the scope of which was unknown to him. Colleges were making long-term decisions regarding course provision without details of the future funding mechanism. The cost of re-establishing construction and craft courses would be prohibitive.

3.5 JP returned to Mr Dalton's point on the Apprenticeship Bill. There is Cross Party agreement on the need for places. The Issue seems to be the capacity to deliver courses, regardless of funding stream. It was suggested that this issue be looked at by the Group:

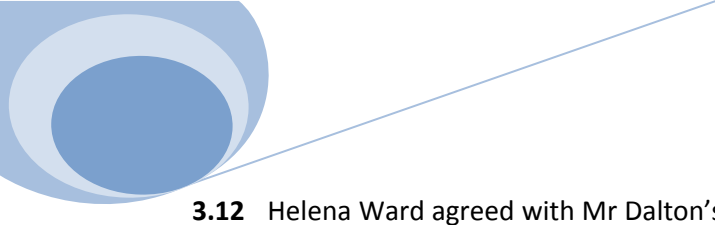
- How to provide the apprenticeships
- To whom [ages], and
- How to support them.

Shona Matthews [CIOBS] noted a link in this discussion to the Roe Review of post 16 education and noted that SCQF had requested that the group seek to understand how the new government will act on the outcomes of that review. Marion Healy added that it would be useful to have someone from the parliamentary group attend a meeting. However Ms Stewart advised that the group was looking at issues of quality assurance and that it might be something that SDS, and perhaps she herself, could present to the group on.

3.6 Polly Purvis [Scotland IS] noted that at the CPG's inaugural meeting in 2008 there was a presentation on development opportunities for young people. Iain McCaskey [Alliance of Sector Skills Councils] reported that the Alliance was due to publish jointly with SDS information about the future projections of each of the 23 SSCs. This was identified as a useful document for the Group.



- 3.7** Anne Meikle [EDAS] raised concerns about the care economy, specifically those being looked after and those doing the looking after. These roles were often gender specific and holding a low status in the economy.
- 3.8** Helena Ward [Creative Scotland] also sought discussion on the need to bridge the gap between education and the industry. JP added that this issue also linked to the relationship between skills and the nature of employment. Shona Matthews advised the group of an offer from Group Members Universities Scotland to present to the Group.
- 3.9** Irene Bell [EDAS] felt it would be of use to have a discussion on the nature of leadership and management in the context of skills progression within the workplace. Ms Bell felt there is little information about management available, or at least not about what ‘management’ actually does. Ms Ward noted that her organisation was also looking at this and would agree it is an area worth deeper analysis. JP added that he is a director on the FutureForum and this was looking at how similar issues. Brian McLeish [Scottish Enterprise] reported that his organisation had done much work on this and skills utilisation. JP asked members to consider any other links such as CIM, CIPD and how we might engage with these groups to progress the discussion. Gillian Black [Opito] referred to a recent event led by the Financial Service Sector which had focused on employability skills across Scotland. . Shona Matthews communicated a note from Scottish Renewables about their desire to encourage awareness of the skills crossover of their field with almost all other sectors. Sarah Cockburn [IRSS] noted that innovation is used to create and reshape – can creativity therefore not be used to drive innovation. Ms Healy requested that there must be a useful report on skills utilisation that could be used. Ms Bell confirmed but that it was not comparable to that available on employees. JP concluded by saying that the Future Forum may also be interested in this discussion.
- 3.10** Ron Dalton suggested there be some discussion around entrepreneurship with so many small businesses in Scotland.
- 3.11** John McKinney suggestion to look at how the education system fails children through school to higher education was widely supported. Louise Rice noted the role of community training particularly in deprived areas. However, there is too much work going on in silos; all doing great work, but need to pull together, share information and to address any remaining gaps.



3.12 Helena Ward agreed with Mr Dalton’s earlier point on entrepreneurship adding that there is a need to look at continuing professional development opportunities and ways of supporting SMEs to take on those leaving education.

3.13 JP brought the discussion to a close thanking everyone for their contributions. There was a need now to document all of these and to prioritise for discussion. The Secretary agreed that these would be circulated ahead of the next meeting and that views and feedback would be welcomed. JP encouraged members to reference in their feedback whether they wished to make site visits or to receive presentations. The Convenors agreed to work on the next meeting programme to ensure progress over, thereafter working around the workplan priorities as determined by members.

4 Continuing Previous Work

4.1 JP explained to new members about the letter which had been sent to the Directorate for Employability, Skills and Lifelong Learning ahead of the Election, in which the work of the CPG had been outlined. The Convenors now proposed to redraft this letter and to send it on to the new Minister – Alistair Alan and to invite the Minister to attend a meeting of the CPG.

5 A.O.C.B

5.1 There were no matters of common business raised.

6 Close and date of next meeting:

As there was no further business for the Group to discuss the Convenor thanked all members for their contributions and closed the meeting. A list of dates for future meetings would be drawn up and circulated to members.

Appendix 1.

Cross Party Group on Skills

AGENDA

Inaugural General Meeting

5.30pm, 28th June 2011

Committee Room 2, The Scottish Parliament.

- 1. Welcome and Introductions**
- 2. Election of Office Bearers**
 - **Convenor and deputy**
 - **Secretary**
 - **Confirmation of members**
- 3. Workplan and future meetings**
 - **Discussion on topics of key interest and issues to be covered**
- 4. Continuing previous work**
 - **Invitation to Skills Minister**
- 5. AOCB**
- 6. Close and date of next meeting**