

Minutes of Meeting 23rd May 2013
Cross Party Group on Skills

Date: 23rd May 2013

Location: Holyrood, Committee Room 4

Present:

A4E	Vicky Wilson	Pearson Education	John Dick/ Bal Birdi
Barnardos	Asima Hussain	Scottish Conservative Party	Gavin Brown MSP
Chartered Banker Institute	Shona Matthews	SCQF	Aileen Ponton
Construction Skills Scotland	Graeme Ogilvy/ Stephen Sheridan	Scottish Enterprise	Brian McLeish
Economic Development Association [Scotland]	Irene Bell	SECTT	Anne Galbraith
Employment Enterprise	Jay Smith	SELECT	Newell McGuinness
ICS Learn	Joanne McManus	Scottish Labour Party	Margaret McCulloch MSP
ITC	Ian McCulloch	SQA	Joe Wilson
Investors in People	Kenny Pattie	Skills Development Scotland	Fiona Stewart/ Amy Brown/ Gail Gibson
Institute of Scottish Motor Industry	Sandy Burgess	STUC	Tommy Breslin
LifeSkills Centres	Gerry Croall	Scottish Training Federation	Colin Dalrymple
NHS Education for Scotland	Simon Williams	The Open University	Bruce Heil
OPITO	Darah Zahran	Working Links	Nicholas Young

Apologies received:

Chartered Banker Institute	Simon Thompson	Open University	Úna Bartley
Creative Scotland	Helena Ward	Scottish Countryside Alliance	Jamie Stewart
Education Scotland	Ruth Ohldag / Ron Cowie	Scottish Enterprise	Steven Williamson
Federation of Small Businesses	Barry McCulloch	SHEEF / University of Abertay	Prof. Stephen Olivier
Investors in People	Judith Ackerman	Scottish Retail Consortium	Fiona Moriarty
JHP Training	Jim Murphy	SEMTA	Brian Humphrey
Loch Lomond & Trossachs Community Partnership	Kate Sankey	SQA	George Brown
NSCC & Independent Roof Training Association	John McKinney	Unite	Lindsey Millen

Agenda Items:

1 Welcome:

- 1.1 Gavin Brown MSP as Co-Convenor welcomed members and opened the Annual General Meeting.

2 AGM:

- 2.1 Mr Brown provided an overview of the past 12 months. Notably, there had been a change in co-convenor, due to the previously Co-Convenor, John Park standing down from Parliament in December 2012. A message of best wishes to the group was passed on from John who is enjoying his new role. Mr Brown was delighted to now be sharing the role of convenor with Margaret McCulloch MSP, following her nomination and election at the meeting in February 2013. It was also noted that soon there would be a further change; Shona Matthews, who has served as Secretary since the CPG was first established in 2008, would be standing down from the role from the end of June. Mr Brown also wished to record the hard work of Jenny Duncan in supporting the smooth running of the Group and formally thanked both Shona and Jenny.

- 2.2 The Co-Covenors confirmed that the Group was quorate and proceeded to the formal business of the AGM.

- 2.3 Nominations for the office bearers:

- 2.3.1 **Convenor:** The Secretary confirmed that no other nominations for the post of Convenor had been received and therefore the nominations for the co-convenor roles during the coming session were:

- Gavin Brown MSP, and
- Margaret McCulloch MSP

This was proposed by Shona Matthews of the Chartered Banker Institute, seconded by Colin Dalrymple of STF and carried unanimously.

- 2.3.2 **Secretary:** The Secretary confirmed that there had been one nomination for the post, and proposed Ryan Reed of SCQF. This was seconded by Gavin Brown. In his comments Mr Brown thanked Aileen Ponton of SCQF for its support of Ryan's nomination. He and Margaret were looking forward to working with him in the coming months.

- 2.4 Nominations for formal acceptance of new members to the group:

- 2.4.1 The following individuals and organisations were proposed for membership of the CPG:

- Gordon Reid
- Application Recruitment Training, A&M Community Training, CMI, City & Guilds, Employment Enterprise, GCU, Institute of Scottish Motor Industry, ITC, Lifeskills, NFU, Scottish Building.

The motion to include all proposed new members was carried unanimously.

- 2.5 As there was no further business for the AGM, Mr Brown formally closed the meeting.
- 3 Before commencing with the normal business of the meeting, Mr Brown took the opportunity to thank the meeting's lunch sponsor Pearson Education for their sponsorship. John Dick and Bal Birdi representing Pearson were invited to address the Group.
- 3.1 John Dick felt that as Pearson had been a Member of the Group for some time and had enjoyed the benefits, it was time to reciprocate. He provided the Group with an introduction to Pearson in Scotland, outlining the roles of the three divisions: the FT Group, Penguin Group and Pearson Education, the latter comprising the familiar names Edexcel and Hyman Publishing. He highlighted the fact that the awarding body name is Pearson Education.

The team is working to ensure what they offer meets the needs of employers. An employer toolkit has been developed and work is underway to ensure it is on the SCQF. Mr Dick noted that for the last three years Pearson has been working somewhat under the radar in Scotland, mainly with training providers in Scotland seeking to deliver work based learning South of the border. He noted that large employers want a UK solution.

Making reference to the previous CPG meeting by NHS Education Scotland, Mr Dick commented that the Pearson team have worked closely with Karen Adams and the NES team on a qualification to support the work relating to measuring returns on investment. Pearson is focused on the learning journey, at the point after formal education, and on developing a 'Learner's Profile'. Pearson would welcome the opportunity to present to the CPG on this and encouraged fellow members to get in touch with any ideas, shared learning or comments with regard to learning journeys.

4 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 4.1 The Secretary noted that some comments had been received from Simon Williams of NES clarifying the section on the RoI presentation.
- 4.2 There were no further comments and the Minutes of the meeting of 7th February 2013 were approved. Matters arising included:

4.2.1 The Richard Review: Mr Brown invited Graeme Ogilvy of Construction Skills Scotland to speak to the point carried forward from the December meeting regarding the Richard Review. Mr Ogilvy provided some background on the proposals and commented that whilst this did affect England only, it was important to note the potential impact of the different funding model. Joe Wilson of SQA asked whether anyone was aware of the impact this might have on national occupational standards in England – noting that the removal of NOS would impact on the rest of the UK. Colin Dalrymple of STF commented that there were already difficulties caused by reduced funding and the demise of some skills councils. There was merit in setting up some grouping [perhaps led by the MA Group] to discuss and ensure something put in place to replace NOS. Fiona Stewart of SDS commented that if NOS do disappear then there will be an impact. It was her understanding that discussions are

taking place with colleagues from the other home countries and she would update the Group as appropriate at future meetings.

4.2.2 Curriculum for Excellence: Following on from the SQA's overview of the new curriculum, and prompted by a request by FSB, SCQF noted that many employers were finding it hard to keep up to date with the qualification types people are exiting school and college with, and therefore falling back on what they are familiar with for comparison. SCQF has devised a 'walk through history' to support employers. This charts Scottish qualifications dating back to the 1960's until the present. It should be noted that those pre-dating the SCQF are not on the framework; however the chart provides a benchmark reference. Copies were passed round to members, with the request that they pass this on and tell others where to find it on the SCQF website. At the time of the meeting it was a news item, but would be later moved into the resource section of the website, as well as a section for employers.

5 Workplan for 2013/14:

- 5.1** The Convenors noted that the Group had tackled a large part of the workplan during the course of the year and invited members to discuss priorities for the workplan going forward.
- 5.2** Fiona Stewart of SDS suggested that SDS open the session in early Autumn with a session providing context, and setting the scene for future skills required. This was received well, although it was noted by Mr Ogilvy of Construction Skills Scotland that there is evidence in his sector from NE Scotland in Aberdeenshire of significant skills shortages now.
- 5.3** Irene Bell of EDAS suggested revisiting the issue of leadership and management; based on the research of EDAS this is still an area for concern and further discussion. She asked that the workplan be reviewed to identify any areas not yet covered by the Group.
- 5.4** Joe Wilson of SQA suggested a session on digital participation, particularly the high and medium end needs with regard to IT and digital literacy. He also noted the increasing skills required by those that interact with the benefits system as this becomes increasingly digitalised. It was agreed that this might form a suitable discussion for the closing meeting of the next session, around May/June time.
- 5.5** John Dick of Pearson Education commenting on the suggestions of fellow members, noted that for a number of these skills discussion topics Dr Pat Watts should be invited to speak, particularly linking this to the issue of skills utilisation. There was support for Mr Dick's suggestion that the issue of funding, how differing initiatives link up and generally understanding the picture of what is going on would be beneficial. Fiona Stewart of SDS noted that she hoped Dr Watts would be part of the presentation team for the opening session.
- 5.6** Bruce Heil of OU asked that the Group consider the important role of open education resources in skills work.

- 5.7** Graeme Ogilvy of Construction Skills Scotland highlighted the fact that the meeting was taking place during Scottish Apprenticeship Week. He had attended some excellent events and was aware of good participation from within his sector with events running all over Scotland. However, he felt there was still opportunities to improve and suggested that with more advance notice, more time to plan, and more people involved at the planning stage, would help engage more employers. Co-convenor Margaret McCulloch MSP suggested that a future meeting review the week; what had happened, what had worked, what didn't. She had herself been to some great events, noting one she had hosted for STF and SDS, and commented on the importance of getting the message out there. Fiona Stewart of SDS welcomed the positive feedback about the Week but agreed whilst very successful it can be better. She highlighted a new red button alert on the OurSkillsForce website, allowing employers required guidance to assistance to request contact. Ms Stewart advised that Gordon McGuinness's team were also targeting SMEs and trying to encourage more engagement from employers who have never taken apprentices. Co-Convenor Margaret McCulloch referred to the Modern Apprenticeship of the Year, noting that MSPs attending had been able to speak to employers from their own constituencies; e-mailing the MSPs in advance with details of who would be attending this and other events during the week might help engage MSP support, noting that MSPs would be limited to attending local events on Monday and Friday only due to parliamentary business mid-week. It was also noted that members of the public were stopping and getting involved as they passed events. Colin Dalrymple of STF felt it was important to make sure there was a focus to any of the events run during the week; the best showcase for apprenticeships are the young people that are participating.
- 5.8** Irene Bell of EDAS, noting the comments of others suggested that the context setting presentation should keep aspirations in focus; not just those of the young, but to look at a mix of skills and mid and high level too.

Gavin Brown MSP thanked everyone for their contributions and would discuss with his Co-Convenor and revisit the workplan to address these issues in the forthcoming programme of meetings.

6 A.O.C.B

- 6.1** Irene Bell wished to promote the EDAS Annual Summit, taking place in June, covering the theme of what should be done to promote recovery. Details of the panel event would be circulated to all members via the Secretary.
- 6.2** Members were informed by Colin Dalrymple of the forthcoming STF annual conference, highlighting employer funding. Details would be made available via the Secretary.

7 Close of Meeting

- 7.1** With no further business to discuss Mr Brown thanked everyone for their ongoing support. The Secretary confirmed that dates for the full meeting programme would be issued over summer.

Appendix 1.

Cross Party Group on Skills

AGENDA

12.45 pm Thursday 23rd May 2013

Committee Room 4, The Scottish Parliament

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Opening of AGM**
 - Convenors' annual report
- 3. Nominations and election of office bearers**
- 4. Nomination and ratification of new members**
- 5. A.O.C.B**
- 6. Close of AGM**
- 7. Open Session of General CPG Business**
 - Vote of thank to lunch sponsor- Pearson Education
 - Minutes of the meeting of 7th February
 - Matters arising
 - Planned Programme 2012/13 session – ideas submitted include:
 1. Employability Fund – working together to showcase examples of best practice
 2. Commonwealth Games 2014 / Ryder Cup
 3. Quality Systems in MA/Employability Fund programmes – develop ideas to consolidate where duplication exists
 4. The work of the Alliance Partnership
 5. Scottish Apprenticeship week – maximising the opportunity to present to MSPs the benefits and dispel myths
- 8. AOCB**
- 9. Close and date of next meeting - TBC**

Convenors' Annual Report 2013

Convenor's report:

A year of change for the CPG: we've had some long standing members move on [and we've welcomed their replacements], we continue to attract new members, we've had a change in co- convenor and soon, a change in Secretary. But none of this has slowed us down:

A joint meeting took place during the summer with the CPG for Colleges and Universities which was well attended and we have noted the interest of those who attended and other members to arrange another similar event. We also have an outstanding action of whether to run something similar with the CPG for Renewables.

Provided feedback and guidance to CRER regarding equality and diversity in modern apprenticeships – a letter was prepared and sent to the Convenor of the Equal Opportunities Committee raising the matter further.

Presentations:

- IIP and Scottish Enterprise on leadership and management skills - how empowered leadership can help put a business into action / positive impact on the economy. Highlighted interesting challenges about lack of role models for women and changing cultural issues and the need for using the correct measures of output.
- Loch Lomond and Trossachs Partnership. We revisited this inspirational case study of how to make improvements that benefit everyone in the community. The concept of the proposed Academy was helpful in showing how this approach might be applied to supporting other rural communities with the skills and opportunities needed. The discussion highlighted some other cases where technology is helping overcome challenges in delivering training and skills
- NHS Education team shared with us how they have been introducing measure to review the return on investment in a meaningful way and provided case studies of how they, despite limited resources, are creating a network of colleagues to ensure this approach is rolled out across their organisation.
- A very useful update from SQA about the Curriculum for Excellence which brought into focus the question of whether higher education and employers are ready for this new type of student /employee.

The Group has also enjoyed some very healthy debates about the issues affecting funding: how to access; trying to understand how funding fits with employer needs; the overlap, or lack of it, between funded initiatives; the direction of funds to required programmes. Such was the range of debate and issues arising that this is most likely an area which we will need to return to during future meetings.

As always we are very grateful to the support shown by members that have also sponsored lunch and refreshments during the past 12 months - special thanks once again to them and for their contributions in providing overviews of the work their organisations: SCQF, Lifeskills, SQA, and Pearson.

We look forward to the continued support of all our members in the 2013/14 session.

Gavin Brown MSP and Margaret McCulloch MSP

