



Education Leeds

Agenda Item:

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REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 14 November 2007

SUBJECT: Review of 14-19 Provision in Leeds

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in
(Details contained in the Report)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Executive Board of the views of Children's Services and Education Leeds with regard to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) West Yorkshire proposal for the changes to Further Education Colleges in Leeds.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 On 8 November 2007 the LSC West Yorkshire published a proposal for changes to the organisation of Further Education Colleges in Leeds, see attached. This proposal follows findings published in the LSC Strategic Area Review which identified the need to review curricula and the structure of learning provision in Leeds. They also follow a recent period of informal consultation on the Strategic Options Review of Further Education Colleges in Leeds and respond to the decision of the LSC West Yorkshire Council in October 2007.

2.2 A period of formal public consultation on the LSC proposal commenced on 8

November 2007 and the LSC are inviting responses to the proposal by the end of the consultation period on 7 December 2007.

2.3 The Education and Inspection Act 2006 gives the local authority the strategic lead for school provision and for securing the 14-19 entitlement for young people, with the essential role of making sure that schools and colleges between them make the full range of opportunities available in Leeds. Because the statutory responsibilities for 14-19 learning are shared by the Local Authority and the Learning and Skills Council, both parties have been working closely together to develop a shared strategy for post 14 learning in Leeds. From 2010 the local authority will have responsibility for the funding of 16-19 year olds in full time learning in schools and colleges leading to a simplification of roles and responsibilities. We are currently working with the LSC on the transition arrangements for this transfer of responsibility.

3.0 **LSC PROPOSALS**

3.1 The LSC wishes to establish a new institution through merging the existing colleges of Joseph Priestley College; Leeds College of Building; Leeds College of Technology; Park Lane College and Leeds Thomas Danby. This would be achieved through the dissolution of the existing corporations and the transfer of respective property, rights and liabilities to a new further education corporation. The principal reasons advanced in support of this proposal include the need to make broad, coherent and comprehensive provision for young people and adults to the highest possible standards whilst conserving and extending specialisms; ensure full access in localities for all learners at all levels and ability ranges; the creation of excellent opportunities for employment for the FE workforce in new outstanding buildings.

4.0 **RESPONSE TO THE LSC PROPOSAL**

4.1 The views expressed in this report are those of Children's Services and Education Leeds and also reflect those previously expressed by Education Leeds Board as part of the informal consultation process on the Strategic Options Review.

4.2 Bringing coherence to secondary and post-16 provision in Leeds is a clear priority from the city-wide Children and Young people's Plan and we feel that the LSC proposal will move us a long way towards achieving this objective. We will continue to work closely with the LSC on a shared strategy to address the challenges we face. This work will be directed through the joint Review Programme Board and supported through a series of working groups.

4.3 We feel the merger of the five FE colleges provides the best opportunity we will ever have to have to create a truly world class vocational provision that would meet the needs of all learners, employers and communities in Leeds. It would ensure no wasteful duplication or competition around skill areas and facilitate a city-wide approach to the planning of provision and the creation of clear learning pathways that is not possible with the current configuration of FE provision.

4.4 We recognise that the proposal are focused on presenting the overall case for the merger of the five colleges and at this stage are not able to provide detail around the resulting infrastructure development.

4.5 We welcome the emphasis in the proposal given to the development of centres of

excellence for learners with learning difficulties and/or difficulties and embrace the opportunity this presents to work with the LSC to better meet the needs of this group of learners.

- 4.6 We fully support the need identified in the proposal to incorporate a strong locality based dimension to the new FE infrastructure that would link closely to schools, employers and other organisations within the community. We will work with the LSC on the development of these locality based centres to ensure they are well placed to deliver significant elements of Post 14 vocational provision. We are particularly mindful of the need to ensure the need to develop high quality locality based facilities to support the delivery of the new Diplomas.
- 4.7 We wish to ensure that all learners have access to the full range of post 16 learning opportunities available in the city. Where schools can deliver high quality financially viable and sustainable post 16 programmes either as individual schools or through local delivery arrangements in partnerships with others schools, colleges and training providers, these arrangements will be fully supported. We will look to work with the LSC to develop other arrangements as part of the city-wide offer.
- 4.8 We see the need to develop models for governance and collaboration that focus the combined expertise of partners and achieve a more collective ownership of the outcomes achieved by all young people in the city. We particularly see the need for schools to have a key role with regard to locality based centres developed as part of the proposal for a new FE infrastructure.

5.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Executive Board is asked to:
Support the views expressed in this report and approve them for use in formulating the Council's official response to the LSC consultation on the proposal for the changes to FE Colleges in Leeds.
- 5.2 Note and authorise the Chief Executive of Education Leeds to draft a detailed response in consultation with the Executive Member for Learning for approval and signature by the Leader of the Council.