



Report of the Head of Scrutiny Support

Executive Board

Date: 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 and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

1.0 Purpose of This Report

- 1.1 This report presents the views of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in relation to the formal proposals for the reorganisation of Further Education (FE) colleges in Leeds published by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) meeting on Thursday 8th November considered the review of 14-19 provision in Leeds. The Scrutiny Board received the report approved by the Executive Board in October. However, Members of the Scrutiny Board were particularly keen at this meeting to consider the LSC proposals for the reorganisation of FE colleges.
- 2.2 Unfortunately, due to the fact that the formal proposals were not published until the day of the meeting, the Scrutiny Board were not able to consider the proposals in any detail. Members did receive a verbal briefing on the proposals from the LSC's Partnership Director for Leeds, and asked a series of questions of the LSC officer, the Executive Member for Learning and Education Leeds officers.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Board gave consideration to the 14-19 review at an earlier stage of the LSC's development of proposals, in March 2007. Arising from that meeting, the Scrutiny Board published a statement, submitted to the Executive Board, which

summarised its concerns and recommendations. These highlighted a number of issues which Members of the Board felt needed to be addressed more fully in the final proposals for reorganisation.

- 3.2 Due to the short timetable for the formal consultation on the college proposals, the Scrutiny Board has not been able to fully consider the proposals and comment to the Executive Board as it had hoped to do. The verbal briefing received by the Scrutiny Board appears to suggest that some of the original concerns have been taken on board at least to some extent, but clearly Scrutiny Board Members have not had the benefit of seeing the actual proposals and asking questions on that basis.
- 3.3 Instead the Scrutiny Board decided to resubmit to the Executive Board the statement that was produced earlier this year. The Scrutiny Board would wish to draw these matters to the Executive Board's attention again, and ask them to satisfy themselves that these issues are adequately addressed in the formal proposals, when the Executive Board agrees the council's formal response to the consultation.
- 3.4 Notwithstanding this, the Scrutiny Board is broadly supportive of the concept of the proposed merger as an element of the overall review of 14-19 provision within Leeds.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 The Executive Board is asked to take account of the Scrutiny Board's observations in agreeing the council's formal response to the LSC consultation.