

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### PLANNING FOR THE ECONOMY AND THE COMMUNITY

1. The driving principle behind change in Leeds should be that the pattern of provision and the structure of institutions are determined by the needs of learners, employers and communities, within the framework of available resources.
2. To achieve the scale of improvement needed there must be better long-term planning of the Leeds 14-19 system as a whole, with all agencies and providers accepting collegiate responsibility for meeting the City's education and skill needs.

### A NEW APPROACH TO TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENT

3. New targets for 16 and 19 year olds need to be set with a recognition of the step-change in aspiration which should come with the new key stage 4 and post 16 curriculum from 2008. An improvement of at least 25percentage points in level 2 achievement at 16 should be set for 2012. Progressive improvement targets for 19+ achievement should take account of increased level 2 performance at 16.
4. Targets need to apply to the whole 14-16 then the 16-19 cohort within an area, so that a consortium of providers - including those supporting work based learning - can take responsibility for the achievement and progression of the whole group. This will require a new approach to performance tables based currently on single institution outcomes.
5. Targets for participation and achievement of 16 year olds, and matching of students to course levels, should be based on expected improvements in key stage 3 achievement arising from current reforms and on young people's interests and aspirations.
6. Working with the Connexions Service, schools need to prepare to be able to fulfil their new duty of ensuring that advice on choice to 14 year olds is clear, comprehensive and impartial.
7. Mindful of differing starting points and needs, targets should be set for particular groups, such as black and minority ethnic groups, girls in engineering and construction., white males, and the NEET group as a whole. These equality and diversity impact measures should vary from time to time, depending on needs.
8. The emphasis on improvement at levels 2 and 3 should not be at the expense of those with learning difficulties or disabilities: any reorganisation of the curriculum or restructuring of schools and colleges should aim to strengthen provision for these

learners so that progression routes for them from 14-19 are as well planned as they are for all other learners. More opportunities should be available for these learners in mainstream settings in Leeds.

9. 16-19 funding released through improved level 2 performance at 16 should be re-directed to skills for employability and level 3 achievement by 19, which is the key to Leeds' future competitiveness. It also benefits individual young people by enhancing their prospects of entry to higher education and good careers.

## **ECONOMIC DRIVERS**

10. Employability skills and qualifications linked to opportunities in the labour market, particularly in skill shortage and growth areas, should be key determinants of the shape of 16-19 vocational provision. Increasingly that provision should be aimed at level 3 qualifications to match the upgrading of work in the local economy.
11. Beyond the local Leeds labour market itself the planning of education and training should relate to the emerging city region developments through its Skills Board.
12. The curriculum plan for Leeds needs to contain an analysis of the current progression to work or further study of 16-19 year olds, identifying areas of over- and under-supply. The LSC's planning for college provision needs to take account of this analysis, prioritising funding for areas of greatest need.
13. To give employers a sound basis for job-specific training and young people a basis for transferability within and across employment, curriculum and professional development for school and college staff engaged in vocational programmes should focus on effective learning for work. This should include the development of functional skills and the skills which are most important across all occupations, such as problem solving and personal effectiveness.

## **GENERAL PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

14. The specialised diplomas, offered at levels 1-3, should be available to all 14-19 learners, based on objectively informed choice. There should be some planning to allow a mix of general and specialised diplomas at level 3, either as preparation for entry to employment at intermediate levels or for progression to vocationally-oriented HE.
15. To meet learners' needs well the system must be treated as a whole. There should be a city-wide planning function to drive and co-ordinate the network of vocational

specialisms:

- Representing the learner and employer voice
- Establishing a strong collaborative network to deliver vocational specialisms across the city, with transparent progression routes
- Ensuring common standards and a focus on excellent provision, services and outcomes
- Managing brokerage of provision where necessary
- Supporting timetabling and transport arrangements
- Leading on curriculum and professional development for a specialism
- Advising on specialist accommodation and resources
- Supporting students' work experience

16. Location of provision should be determined by considerations of learner access and of cost-effectiveness of accommodation, travel and specialist teaching across an area, and not by the often unplanned preferences of individual institutions. There should be a presumption in favour of level 2 and 3 vocational provision being made in colleges, or in work-based learning provision in cases where specialist resources and expertise are needed.
17. Further action on 14-19 provision needs to be planned in harness with the LSC's objectives for the future shape of adult provision in Leeds and with its plans for the development of work-based learning.

## **14-16 VOCATIONAL PROVISION**

18. Planning for 14-16 vocational provision should allow for all to undertake some vocational learning and for up to 70% of the cohort to be engaged for two days per week in the new diploma provision in some schools.
19. Leeds Local Authority/Education Leeds should aim to encourage only its best performing consortia to bid for approval through the Diploma Gateway process to deliver the new diplomas from 2008. Other consortia should concentrate on improving basics of collaborative working before applying for a 2009 start.
20. Whether Leeds is approved by the DfES to provide the new diplomas from 2008 or not, there should be a plan to ensure that all vocational choices will be available for 14 year olds as they come on stream from 2008. From 2010 all 14 year olds should be able to choose from all 14 vocational areas, from entry level to level 3, within the Leeds area.
21. To ensure that the system of vocational provision is designed to follow from the predicted choices of 14 year olds, and not to pre-determine them, there needs to be

further modelling of:

- what choices learners are likely to make as the new diplomas become available from 2008, informed by information, advice and guidance which is both objective and comprehensive
- how the profile of teaching, lecturing and training and management staff will need to change to deliver the new courses, supported by continuous professional development
- what additional specialist accommodation will be needed for the new provision
- how standards should be set and achieved for provision
- what revenue and capital costs will follow from this

This modelling should be utilised to develop options for re-configured service delivery in the best interests of learners, employers and communities.

## 16-19 PROVISION IN SCHOOLS

22. The central imperative for all schools should be to maximise the achievement of level 2 qualifications by the age of 16 so that 16-19 resources can more properly be concentrated on the achievement of level 3 qualifications, and not to be distracted by the challenge of making 6th form provision where this is both ineffective and poor value for money.
23. There should be a collegiate approach to the inner Leeds area, with all providers taking a shared responsibility for improving achievement, and all funding and organisational arrangements serving this goal.
24. There should be a re-organisation of provision for those young people in 6<sup>th</sup> forms in the inner Leeds secondary schools which currently provide inadequate choice and below average outcomes.
25. The aspiration in inner Leeds should be to give a breadth of choice of the 25 most popular AS/A2 subjects in a wide range of possible combinations, and in combination with level 2 and 3 provision in the new specialised diplomas.
26. The re-organisation of 6<sup>th</sup> form provision in the inner Leeds area should be planned within the overall framework for 16-19 re-organisation described in recommendation 37 below.
27. Current discussions on Building Schools for the Future should take account of the need for improved 16-19 general education provision in the inner Leeds area, situating changes within an overall, integrated capital strategy for the 14-19 phase, and not pre-

empting any elements of such a strategy. In particular, there should not be planning for the expansion of 6th forms in inner Leeds schools.

## **FE PROVISION: PROFILE, OUTCOMES AND FUNDING**

28. To develop the skills which are needed by the Leeds economy to compete there must be a progressive shift in 14-19 resourcing towards levels 3 and 4, following from the achievement of more full level 2 qualifications by 16 and by 17.
29. Leeds FE needs to be able to fulfil the new specialisation agenda for colleges which follows from the Foster report, as presaged in the FE White Paper and reinforced by the Leitch report on skills.
30. The targeted increase in progression to level 3 vocational courses will require FE to be prepared with highly qualified vocational staff and facilities appropriate to developing higher level skills. Both the college sector and local universities should plan appropriate HE progression based on improved level 3 outcomes.
31. Leeds FE should aim to be consistently better than the national average benchmarks in most areas of provision. The LSC should support this by innovative approaches to use of data, shared systems and partnership working to develop area wide standards and indicators.
32. Any new organisational proposals should satisfy the Framework for Excellence presaged by the FE White Paper. Proposals should show how all three elements of this framework - quality, responsiveness and financial health - could be delivered to a higher standard by a new city-wide FE service.
33. Additional funding will need to be targeted to 16 to 19 activity to reflect higher rates of participation and increased retention. This could be achieved through additional allocations or the re-prioritisation of funding.
34. Reductions in funding for lower priority provision, or provision where providers cannot demonstrate the capacity to provide excellence, would enable the commissioning of new learning opportunities. It is important for newly commissioned provision to be given access to funding to support capital and start-up to ensure an excellent learner experience. This change might be delivered through the new arrangements for competitions.
35. Since WBL and FE significantly rely on the level 2 position it will be important to map out progression routes for young people who fail to achieve a level 2 vocational award.

This could involve a range of models which should reflect individual circumstances. For example:

- enhanced, re-focused Level 2 in colleges post 16, potentially streamlined to fast-track achievement through programmes accrediting elements of prior attainment
- staying on post-16 in school for a short period and mid year movement to FE and WBL to pursue Level 3
- young apprenticeships at KS4, perhaps with a 12 month period in school to complete
- a substantial period in school to complete but with enhanced work experience and FE links
- flexibility to finish a vocational diploma with school, FE or WBL and, where practical, start elements of level 3 to speed up progression
- configuring provision to be inclusive, addressing EDIMS and NEETs targets, and drawing on voluntary and community sector experience in this area

## **FE COLLEGE STRUCTURES**

36. The Education and Inspections Bill and FE White Paper with subsequent legislation offer the opportunity for radical, student-centred arrangements between schools, colleges, WBL providers, universities and the voluntary/community sector, which should be investigated. These arrangements include partnerships, merger and collaboration short of merger, underpinned by formal and legal agreements such as Trusts. In order to prepare the currently unsustainable structure of FE colleges for a challenging future there should be a review of these options for improvement, with a view to new arrangements. Some elements of these may start, with voluntary collaboration, in September 2007; others from September 2008. This review must also address partnership-based options for improving the currently low levels of achievement and restricted range of choice in inner Leeds 6<sup>th</sup> forms.
37. The Universities should be involved in city-wide planning so that it is possible for any young person to see a track forward from key stage 4 through to foundation degree level which can be pursued locally and which does connect to the Leeds' economy. Ideally, 11-21 progression and opportunity routes will be clear and supported by all types of provider collaboratively.

## **FE: THE ESTATE**

38. An estates strategy to accompany structural change should reduce the number of college sites in Leeds and the resultant duplication of services, especially in administration and learning resource centres. Investment in facilities urgently required by colleges would be made as part of an integrated capital strategy for FE in Leeds

rather than singly by individual corporations based on historic patterns of provision or individual college preferences.

39. Opportunities for re-investment that could lead to a more efficient and affordable pattern of provision should be taken, including:
  - investment in new general accommodation
  - development of specialist vocational 14-16 facilities, linked with school investment plans
  - investment to support the LSC's new specialisation agenda for colleges, including preparation for the skill needs of the future
  - improvement in social space and sports provision in Leeds colleges
  
40. The likely impact of the movement of funds between priorities should be taken into account in capital planning to ensure that funds are not invested in areas where activity may be reduced or removed. Additionally, new expenditure should reflect the potential areas for commissioned growth and the impact of the vocational diplomas.
  
41. An integrated capital strategy should fit needs-led re-configuration of schools and colleges, informed by the modeling of vocational choices of the 14-16 cohort and the expected improvements in range, quality and type of 16-19 vocational provision. The proposals from the colleges' estate review should match investment plans for schools involving Building Schools for the Future and Academy and Specialist School developments.