



Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (City and Regional Partnerships)

Date: 25th July 2008

Subject: Progress Report on the Board's Working Groups

Electoral Wards Affected: All



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Scrutiny Board has established a Skills Working Group, a Small Businesses Working Group and a University Fees Working Group to consider the appropriateness of bringing forward draft terms of reference for consideration by the Board with a view to undertaking inquiries on these issues.

2.0 Skills Working Group

2.1 The Skills Working Group met on the 3rd July and a note of that meeting was reported to the Board in July 2008. A copy of the note is attached for ease of reference. The Board agreed to undertake an inquiry on this issue.

2.2 Draft terms of reference for this inquiry have now been prepared and will be considered by the Skills Working Group on 22nd September 2008. If they are agreed by the Working Group the terms of reference will be presented to today's meeting for consideration.

2.3 The Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules require that, before embarking on an inquiry, the Board seeks and considers the views of the relevant Directors and Executive Members. These views will need to be taken into account in finalising the terms of reference.

2.4 This particular inquiry will involve the Directors of City Development and Environment and Neighbourhoods and the relevant Executive Board Members with portfolio responsibility for these services. The relevant Directors and Executive Members have been invited to comment on these terms of reference before the meeting today.

2.5 Any comments that are received will be reported at the Board meeting today.

2.6 Councillor J Lewis has been invited to attend the next meeting of the Working Group when it considers the draft terms of reference.

3.0 Small Businesses Working Group

3.1 The Small Business Working Group met on the 18th July 2008 and a note of that meeting was circulated to Members of the Board.

3.2 The Working Group asked for a fact sheet on this matter to be prepared by the City Development department for submission to the Group to assist them in their deliberations. This fact sheet is currently being prepared and will be submitted to the Working Group in September 2008.

4.0 University Fees Working Group

4.1 The Board at the last meeting considered a request for scrutiny from representatives of the University Unions concerning University Fees. It was agreed to establish a Working Group to consider this matter further with representatives from the Universities and the University Unions.

4.2 It has not been possible to get all the parties involved to agree a date for this meeting until the 17th October 2008 at 2pm in committee room 3, Civic Hall.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Board is asked to

- (i) note progress to date with regard to these Working Groups.
- (ii) consider and approve terms of reference proposed by the Board's Working Group for an inquiry into skills.

Background Papers

There are no background papers not attached to this report