



Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (City and Regional Partnerships)

Date: 17th December 2008

Subject: Additional Session – Skills Inquiry

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 Board at its last meeting considered the current proposed arrangements for the Multi Area Agreement (MAA) in Leeds. In particular the rationale for the MAA (evidence based) and the proposed outcomes of the MAA, and impact on Leeds businesses and residents.
- 1.2 Members also heard from the Principals of the Leeds College of Building and Joseph Priestley College who had decided not to participate in the merger of 3 Further Education Colleges (FE) in the city and to remain as independent institutions.
- 1.3 In view of the fact that the Principles of the FE Colleges which are to merge i.e. Park Lane (Leeds and Keighley), Thomas Danby, and Leeds College of Technology were unable to attend the Board's last meeting it was agreed to hold an additional session today to enable them to give evidence to the Board on the reasons for supporting the merger.
- 1.4 Members were interested to hear from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which had led a detailed process of consultation and evidence gathering to consider the future arrangements for Further Education in the city and from college principals what the likely impact on employers, individuals and communities will be as a consequence of the merger and on the plans for:
 - the new college,
 - its governance, and
 - ability to respond to skills needs
- 1.5 The consultation document 'Excellence and Inclusion (May 2008)' sets out the

benefits of this merger and an extract states that it will:

- create a unified and successful FE presence serving Leeds and the region that contributes to improved economic success and social inclusion
- make broad, coherent and comprehensive provision for young people and adults to the highest possible standards, whilst conserving and extending specialisms
- place learners and employers at the heart of the system, enabling them to influence what is on offer and how it is delivered
- ensure full access in localities and neighbourhoods for learners at all levels and all ability ranges, promoting inclusion
- create excellent opportunities for employment
- create a new city-wide FE estate for the 21st century
- establish a new college which is financially healthy and meets national, regional and local needs through the employment of best value principles

1.6 It is anticipated that the new college will be formed from 1st January 2009.

2.0 Terms of Reference

2.1 A copy of the Board's approved terms of reference for this inquiry is attached for reference purposes.

3.0 Witnesses

3.1 The following witnesses have indicated that they will attend today's meeting:

Cristina George, Learning and Skills Council (Re-organisation of FE Colleges)
Maxine Room, Principal, Park Lane College (Leeds and Keighley)
Roy Thorpe, Principal, Thomas Danby College,
Martin Dean, Deputy Chief Executive, Leeds Initiative

3.2 The Principal of the Leeds College of Technology, Peter Ryder unfortunately has a prior engagement and is unable to attend the meeting today.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Board is asked to

- (i) Receive the report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development and comment on and ask questions of the witnesses present.
- (ii) Consider what, if any, further information or points of clarification the Board requires to conclude Session 2 of its inquiry.
- (iii) Discuss any subsequent issues.
- (iv) Identify for the Board's next session of its Inquiry on 15th January 2009 the witnesses it would like to hear evidence from.

Background Papers

None used