

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Inquiry

14-19 education review

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 There are significant national and local changes taking place in the learning landscape for the 14-19 age-group. These include changes to the curriculum and the introduction of diplomas; the increase in apprenticeships; the raising of the leaving age; the transfer of funding from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities; new information, advice and guidance (IAG) requirements; the local review of college provision; and the ongoing development of trusts and academies.
- 1.2 In September 2008, the Scrutiny Board agreed to undertake an inquiry assess and make recommendations on how 14-19 provision in Leeds needed to develop, with a particular focus on the proposed 'confederation' approach to future 14-19 partnership working across Leeds which aims to develop effective area partnerships between schools, colleges, work-based learning and other providers which can help them collaborate and plan together to:
- Meet the needs and aspirations of all learners
 - Meet the needs of society and the economy
 - Improve the quality and efficiency of provision
 - Deliver coherence, integration and impact in localities
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Board considered background information from Education Leeds on the national and local policy context in terms of the drivers for change in the provision of 14-19 learning, visited another local authority to discuss their approach to 14-19 collaboration, and met with representatives of providers and other stakeholders to discuss their roles in the future delivery of 14-19 education and training in Leeds.

2.0 The 14+ Review

- 2.1 There is general recognition that significant elements of the new 14-19 curriculum (which will be a statutory entitlement to all learners by 2013) cannot be offered by all post-14 providers as single institutions. This is particularly true of the 17 Diplomas, which include the provision of applied learning in a work-related sector and further study to enhance breadth or depth according to the learner's interest. By September 2009 there will be around 700 learners on diploma courses in Leeds, and an anticipated 5,000 by 2013. The Foundation Learning Tier offers qualifications at entry level and level 1 within the QCF (Qualifications and Credit Framework) needs to be in place in all local authorities by September 2010. Here too, each pathway will include vocational knowledge, skills and understanding where again there will be opportunities for stronger partnership provision and planning. A further incentive to stronger collaboration is the need to ensure learners have the widest possible choice of high quality courses. This is particularly the case for learners in many school sixth forms which would otherwise find difficulty in sustaining more specialist Level 3 A-Level courses at a time of reductions in post 16 funding.
- 2.2 A confederation or partnership model has been developed, similar to approaches which have emerged elsewhere in the country. These partnerships include secondary schools, specialist inclusive learning centres (SILCS), further education, training providers, employers, the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) and higher education (HEI). The partners have agreed to work together to plan and deliver

aspects of 14+ provision within clear city-wide strategic protocols, and building on the already successful 'local delivery partnerships'.

- 2.3 A similar and complementary area-based approach is being developed to ensure the provision of comprehensive, accessible information advice and guidance (IAG) linked to Connexions and other functions of the Integrated Youth Support Service.
- 2.4 A confederation or partnership approach to 14+ provision also has the potential to align well over the longer term in helping to focus learning and training opportunities alongside major regeneration projects as well as the wider functions of services and provision for children, young people, families and their communities. The development of this 14+ partnership approach thus links to a wider local authority agenda which aims to align service delivery at a more localised level through Children's Trust arrangements. It will help ensure we have a more joined up approach to tackling key issues such as the young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET).

3.0 Key developments

- 3.1 A series of events have been held across the five area partnerships where most key partners have been involved in discussing improved collaborative arrangements around the 14-19 agenda. Also, we recently held a successful 14-19 Conference focused on collaboration and good practice that was well attended by representatives from all key stakeholder groups across the city.
- 3.2 Broad terms of reference for the confederations or partnerships have been discussed and agreed. Each area has developed an action plan for 2009-10 based on area needs, informed by city-wide priorities.
- 3.3 A wide range of activities for providers and other stakeholders, parents and learners have been organised by the 14-19 Team to raise awareness of 14-19 issues and particularly the new curriculum offer.
- 3.4 The transfer of staff from the LSC to the local authority is being handled sensitively and progressing well. A report has been to Executive Board outlining the new arrangements following the Machinery of Government changes transferring these powers from the LSC to the local authority and further reports will be submitted in due course.
- 3.5 To deliver a coherent strategy and clear accountability for all key activity across the 14-19 phase, it has been proposed that the IYSS Strategic Plan will be integrated with the 14-19 Plan in order to develop a 13-19 (25) Learning and Support Plan.
- 3.6 Agreement has been reached on representation, remit and terms of reference for a city-wide partnership group reporting to the 14-19 Strategy Group to help plan provision and act to promote high quality learning opportunities and more consistent, impartial advice, guidance and support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities LLDD aged 14-25.

4.0 Next steps

- 4.1 Agree appropriate leadership, co-ordination and accountability arrangements for the area partnerships.

- 4.2 Ensure that elected members through the Area Committee structures are consulted and involved in helping to shape and influence the implementation of area priorities in the 14-19 Plan.
- 4.3 The new integrated approach to planning will be reflected in the key groups that direct and monitor planning in future. Elected members will be consulted as part of the review of the 14-19 Strategy Group, IYSS Strategic Board and their sub-groups to ensure structures reflect a collaborative approach to planning and delivery and are appropriately connected to area partnership arrangements.
- 4.4 Develop a city-wide approach to support the needs of vulnerable learners and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities 14-25.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is proposed that a report is submitted to Scrutiny Board in 12 months time to update members on the effectiveness of the new collaborative approach to planning, funding and delivery.