



Assistant Chief Executive (Planning Policy & Improvement)

Scrutiny Board: City & Regional Partnerships

Date: 8th October 2009

Subject: Leeds City Region Employment & Skills Board (ESB)

Electoral Wards Affected: All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The development of an Employment and Skills Board (ESB) for the city region proposed by the Skills and Labour Market Panel has been driven by the desire for the substantial publicly funded investment into adult skills to better reflect the needs of the economy.
- 2.2 The move to an ESB with devolved strategy-setting powers also formed part of the successful submission to the pilot forerunner city region process outlined in the Pre-budget report.

3.0 Progress to date

- 3.1 Chief Executives have agreed to directly support the development of options for a robust ESB, with the Chief Executive of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council confirmed as the officer lead in the development of the ESB and the wider city region adult skills and employment agenda.
- 3.2 Secretariat officers have met with the Chair of the Business Leadership Group to outline the proposals and ensure buy-in and engagement with the process.
- 3.3 BIS has prepared draft guidance (shown at Annex) which sets out proposed criteria for designating individual ESBs as strategy-setting bodies. A number of bilateral meetings have taken place over summer between Secretariat officers and the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) to progress the ESB element of the city region pilot forerunner programme.

3.4 Discussion also took place in July between Leaders and Government Ministers to discuss the forerunner pilot programme including the emergent proposals for an ESB.

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 Negotiations with BIS have indicated the following timescale would be achievable, subject to the agreement of Leaders:

- Forerunner proposals signed off by Ministers in October/November 2009; to be launched at the LCR Summit in November.
- Shadow Employment and Skills Board to be in place by December 2009.
- Work and Skills Plan to be finalised by ESB by April 2010.

4.2 A steering group has been established, including senior representation from the Chief Executives Group, Business Leadership Group, Secretariat, Learning and Skills Council, Yorkshire Forward, Job Centre Plus, and Government Office with the objective of working up options for the following:

- ESB terms of reference and membership
- Linkages, including between the ESB and Leaders Board and proposed Regional arrangements.
- Outline structure and content for the proposed work and skills plan
- How strategy-setting powers would be exercised
- Capacity for the delivery of a robust ESB and work and skills plan

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Scrutiny Board is requested to:

- Note the timescale for the establishment of the city region ESB with strategy-setting powers
- Consider whether further work is required to ensure that Leeds is in a position to engage with and influence the development of the ESB.

Background Papers

Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) criteria note