

Update to the merger of Joseph Priestley College and Leeds City College

On 1st August 2011 Joseph Priestley merged with Leeds City College. The College undertook to update the councillors of South Leeds on a regular basis on progress and implications for South Leeds.

The focus of the first 15 months has been to align services and the curriculum offer and to address staffing structures and management issues. This has been done whilst maintaining a strong focus on students and their experience. Every effort has been made to minimise any negative impact of the merger on students, staff and the employers we work with. It is still early days for the merger but the overall stability it has brought, both now and for the future, should be noted as a positive.

The College has acquired the Print works. This is part of the overall property strategy of the College. Initially the College will only develop and use part of the building with further development over the next 10 years. The buildings will house several important vocational faculties including Hospitality and Catering and Hair and Beauty. This will provide more accessible progression to higher level programmes from former Joseph Priestley sites.

Funding has also been secured from a Capital renewal Fund from the Skills Funding Agency, to contribute to the redevelopment of the Campus in Morley. This may involve a new or existing building being developed into a Campus to serve the community and provide an improved learning environment and facilities. Planning is in the very early stages but this marks the commitment the college has to providing learning locally.

The future curriculum offer is under discussion covering what can and should be offered as full time provision for the 16 to 18 age group. No major changes are planned for the immediate future other than the addition of retail as an option as the retail sector offers significant career opportunities in Leeds.

The offer for adults wanting to enhance their skills and qualifications has been reviewed. Government funded adult provision is focused on employability and includes a continued emphasis on literacy, numeracy and IT skills. For 12/13 the offer includes Routeways to Work programmes developed with Jobcentre Plus for Jobcentre Plus referrals. This includes a Retail programme, Security qualifications, Health and Social Care provision, Esol, Literacy and Numeracy and employability skills.

The partnership working with Employment Leeds, Land Securities and Jobcentre Plus and Leeds City College, focussing on the White Rose Learning Centre now called 'The Point' has resulted in the delivery of routeways to work for unemployed adults locally for South Leeds residents and full time retail learners having some of their classes in a real work environment. Delivery began in June 2012 with the programme initially reflecting demand from Jobcentre Plus but will evolve through negotiation with wider stakeholders.

The provision for young adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities is being maintained at the Joseph Priestley centre. The College is actively working with

Childrens' Services, schools; SILCS and Social care to build a city wide offer which is responsive to needs and the SEN agenda.

The SAIL (Supporting Achievements in Learning) programme for those not in education, employment or training continues to be delivered at the South Leeds Hub. The curriculum offer at the hub has been developed and extended and is being re-launched this spring term focussing on a broad definition of NEET, to include 16- 24 and the wider family that can influence a young person's future. The College is working city wide to build and strengthen working relationships between IGEN, Prospects, Connexions, and voluntary sector organisations to inform the curriculum offer and facilitate take up of the offer.

No major changes to the Joseph Priestley buildings in Beeston and Rothwell are planned other than rebranding, routine maintenance and upgrading of the facilities. Funding has been secured from a Capital renewal Fund from the Skills Funding Agency, to contribute to the redevelopment of the Campus in Morley, this may involve a new or existing building being developed into a Campus to serve the community, and provide an improved learning environment and facilities. Planning is in the very early stages, but this marks the commitment the college has to providing learning locally.

Joseph Priestley staff and managers are steadily being integrated into the Leeds City College faculties and departments. For some there have been welcome opportunities to take on more responsibility. The Joseph Priestley sites have been incorporated into Leeds City College's Community faculty with Inner South focussing on integrating the programmes at Beeston and Burton Road and Outer South focussing on Rothwell and Morley. Management posts are still being recruited to. In addition to support the South Leeds agenda a dedicated development worker post was recruited and is actively working with stakeholders locally.

The merger will enable the College to make a stronger contribution to the regeneration of the south of Leeds and to work with other agencies to narrow the educational achievement gap. The College is focused on building pathways to higher level qualifications and supporting individuals to progress. The opportunities to plan across the city should bring significant benefits and the improved coherence of provision will enable us to target resources to the areas of greater need.

Area Committee is asked to note the progress made since the merger.