

Report on the response to the LSC Review of Post 16 Learning Provision in Greater Cambridge.



Leading learning and skills

7th April 2008

1 Background.

1.1 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in Cambridgeshire with the support of partner organisations undertook a review of Post-16 learning provision in Greater Cambridge. The review looked at the ambitions and capacity of current providers, new capacity that has been agreed and the need for additional capacity that will be required to meet the expected demographic growth by 2021 and beyond.

The LSC took views from its partners in the Cambridge Area 14-19 Partnership, which include the County Council, and the 14-19 providers; Lifelong Learning Topic Groups involved in major developments and Cambridge City Council. An initial report was drafted in Autumn of 2007, and the review published for wider consultation incorporated responses received from a narrow consultation in September and October.

1.2 The review documentation together with an introductory letter from the Area Director and feedback form was published on the LSC website www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/EastofEngland/whatwedo/ on 30th January 2008 with a request for any feedback to be given by 29th February. An advertisement was placed in the Public Notice section Cambridge Evening News on 30th January detailing the review and the feedback process. Additionally, the LSC sent approximately 120 copies of the review documentation to named individuals in partner organisations, schools, colleges etc in the Greater Cambridge area.

1.3 It was clear from the preparation of the review, that predictive growth models are complex and that there are many planning assumption dependencies. The LSC requested comments on the review as a whole and the rationale for the projected number of 16/18 learners and of particular value was feedback relating to:

- The principles which guided the review,
- The overall scope of the review in terms of coverage and links to new and emerging Government policy
- The projected growth in demand including the rationale behind the models
- The potential additional capacity

- The overall conclusions and the associated challenges
- Any other comment or concerns

2 Response to the review.

2.1 The response period closed on February 29th and included in this report are any responses received up to 18th March. In total nine responses were received, each reflecting the collective views of the organisation making the response.

2.2 The main points from the responses are summarised as follows:

- The principles, scope, conclusions and overall comprehensiveness of the review were welcomed and it was recognised that all of the developments have now been shared in one comprehensive paper.
- Respondents stated that the implementation of the review requires a high degree of collaboration, partnership working and careful consideration of funding.
- A system of effective, comprehensive and unbiased information, advice and guidance to learners is seen as vital.
- Of particular comment is the need to ensure that new provision ensures a balanced curriculum offer including the vocational pathways that encourage more young people to enjoy and achieve in their learning. Three respondents remark that any new provision that may arise from the current and any future presumptions should be required to contribute to this and be planned in such a way as to avoid damaging current collaborative success
- There is uncertainty regarding how quickly housing growth for the Cambridge sub-region will be delivered and transport issues addressed. There is a need to respond in a flexible way to any future changes that may be required and the information needs to be reviewed periodically.
- Some respondents indicated that the review needed to have more emphasis on the needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, reference to provision that addresses the issues for excluded or hard to reach groups, and a reference to NEET or young people for whom English is an additional language. Also, that the positive contribution made by existing providers should be recognised.
- One respondent commented that there is little reference to the Third Sector providers also that the review focused mainly on full time learners and did not comment on the growth in part time learners and how their interests may be addressed.

- The impact on facilities for adult learning should also be taken into account when considering 16-18 provision is the view of the respondent organisation commenting on the Third Sector.
- One respondent commented that the review could have been better if the environmental aspects of new builds, the impact on climate change ie the length of journeys and likely mode of travel were considered.
- Helpful suggestions for tidying up some of the text, implementation dates and information in some tables were made by a number of respondents.

3 Next steps.

- 3.1 The LSC would like to thank the respondents for the time taken and their comprehensive input. We will revise the review documentation in the light of the comments received and in particular we will be inserting new sections on the needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and the groups identified in the sixth bullet point. We intend to complete the revisions and additions so that the revised document can be released to stakeholders in June 2008.
- 3.2 Since the review we have developed a high level Risk Register which identifies the top risks and their causal factors associated with delivering sufficient and appropriate provision to meet the demographic growth projections up to 2021. This will be placed on the LSC website during May 2008 and form the basis for discussion at the Cambridge Area Partnership.
- 3.3 The LSC is committed to the periodic review of the population projections and its local strategies. It intends to continue work in partnership with local stakeholders to ensure the successful delivery of the growth agenda and the raising of standards and choice for all learners.

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