

## **agenda for change Progress Report**

Update on delivering the FE White Paper

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**Audience** Council

**LSC office** National Office

**Publication intent** Internal

**Agenda item** 6

**Paper** LSC 02/2007

## **Background and introduction**

- 1 The White Paper: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances, was published in March 2006 and made 69 recommendations for change to the FE sector. From these, 21 priorities were identified by Ministers for close management.
- 2 The FE Systems Programme was created by the DfES and LSC to take forward the 21 priorities. The LSC, through the alignment of *agenda for change* as the programme for delivery, is taking forward 16. The DfES and partners are taking forward the remaining 5.
- 3 Some of the priorities were contained within existing *agenda for change* themes, for example, Framework for Excellence, Managing Information across Providers and Self Regulation. These are therefore well established projects, moving ahead of other newly formed projects.
- 4 The Programme is progressing well, although there are issues that require immediate action to ensure the programme remains on track.

## **Purpose**

- 5 This paper provides an update on the LSC's progress in delivering the FE White Paper under *agenda for change*.

## **Recommendation**

- 6 The Council are asked to note the contents of the paper.

## **Key points/issues**

### **Overall assessment**

- 7 Whilst the Programme is doing well on significant milestones, there has been some slippage, particularly around (P6) Developing a scorecard and rating (Framework for Excellence) (see action below in Risks) and the slight delay in the Leitch Review publication had a knock-on effect on the Demand-led Funding Consultation. There are some key challenges ahead and whilst measures are in place to manage those risks, it is still relatively early days for the successful delivery of the Programme.
- 8 As the more detailed summary shows (annex A), one programme is reporting Red, (P6) Developing a scorecard and rating. This is because feedback from the KPMG report suggests that there is no agreed vision or purpose and agreement about the use of the Framework for Excellence. Major restructuring of the project is in hand with remedial actions in place to address the risks and issues so we are confident the situation is improving. Policy publication has been delayed until mid-February.
- 9 One programme is reporting Amber/Red: Developing an Account Mechanism (P 16) where lack of staff has resulted in delays to policy development. Action is in hand to manage the slippage.
- 10 In addition, the Council will wish to note the delay in publishing the minimum level of performance (MPL) and associated guidance, which limits the time for the sector to consider and subscribe to the concept as a process. This impacts upon other priorities, particularly Priority 10/12: Planning and Funding provider capacity and contestability as MPLs set the benchmark for acceptable provision and provides assurance for provider capacity.

### **Key achievements**

- 11 Since October, key achievements include publication of the Demand led System Consultation document, which includes sections on light-touch planning and the implementation plan / long terms strategy for widening the provider base, the FE presumption guidance alongside 2006/07 guidance on 6<sup>th</sup> form presumption and competition guide and the policy on personalisation.
- 12 The LSC capital prospectus is ready for publication for the end of January.
- 13 Also, a single strategic partner is in place for each current college / provider and the Construction Skills Academy was formally launched by Alan Johnson and Phil Hope on 27 November. There has been confirmation of the New Standard testing model and sector specific criteria for engineering (SEMTEA), construction (CITB) and ICT (E-Skills) (P14); The draft FEISA protocol has gained broad agreement from stakeholders (P21a)

### **Risks**

- 14 The Framework for Excellence Programme (priority 6) has agreed a fourteen point action plan to address the significant risks and issues that were

identified within the programme readiness report from KPMG and the outcomes of the consultation exercise. These risks are:

- timescales for both scorecard and Framework for Excellence (FfE) are too ambitious so it is difficult to assess the benefits of the programme;
- whether the programme is fit for purpose and the possibility of perverse incentives and unintended consequences if programme proceeds without proper testing;
- project portfolio and governance are overly complex and consequently ineffective
- such a large and complex programme risks incoherence or inconsistency
- no agreed vision or purpose, differing priorities among stakeholders, no agreement about the usage of the Framework
- credibility of FfE and ability to deliver key benefits of informing learner choice and putting learners in the driving seat will be undermined because of exclusion of schools. Action: Ask Minister to consider inclusion of school 6th forms in medium to long term.

- 15 There remains a risk where we need to ensure all the priorities are working towards a consistent and cohesive set of benefits for the FE System. This should be addressed through the work of the KPIs and programme evaluation. Particular reference is made within priority 10/12 (Planning and Funding provider capacity and contestability) where there is a need to ensure other parts of the reform programme develop in a way that is consistent to the needs of contestability, and 15 (Employer Voice), where a coherent approach between Framework for Excellence and New Standard must be developed and communicated externally to ensure there is no duplication and confusion in the sector.

## **Clearance**

- 16 This paper has been cleared by Rob Wye, Director, Strategy and Communications Group.

## **Legal implications**

- 17 There are no legal implications arising from this paper.

## **Financial implications**

- 18 There are no financial implications arising from this paper.

## **Risk management**

- 19 All risks associated within the programme are being managed by the agenda for change Programme Office

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