

## agenda for change: Progress Report

Update on the delivery of the FE White Paper

**Date of issue** 20 March 2007

**Audience** Council

**LSC office** National Office

**Publication intent** Internal

**Agenda item** 9

**Internal paper ref** LSC 15/2007

## 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 17. The DfES and QCA are taking forward the remaining 4.

## Purpose

- 3 This paper provides an overview of current progress with the LSC's *agenda for change* and recent key achievements in the delivery of the FE White Paper, Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances.

## Recommendation

- 4 The Council is invited to note the recent progress to date on the LSC's *agenda for change*.

## Key points/issues

### Key achievements

- 5 The Programme is progressing line with agreed targets and milestones. Recent key achievements include the following:

- a The Demand led System Consultation document has been published, which includes sections on light-touch planning and the implementation plan / long terms strategy for widening the provider base.
- b The LSC's capital prospectus has been published.
- c An Information Authority Board has been created in response to the White Paper commitment to establish a single gatekeeper mechanism for setting data collection and reporting standards in FE and an operational data service to collect and report the data to those standards. An independent Chair of the Board is being recruited. To take forward the work on an operational data service, the LSC have been asked to develop a pilot service to test out key aspects of the new arrangements.
- d The Minister, Bill Rammell, has written to the AoC, ALP, 157 Group and Sixth Form Colleges Forum, inviting them to set up the Practitioner Panel for FE publications. There has been a positive response from these representative bodies and the first meeting of the embryonic panel will be on 23 March. The Panel's job will be to scrutinise documents that the DfES and LSC propose sending out to FE providers, and it will be able to challenge on issues of detail or on issues relating to the relevance or need for such a document within the wider context. The panel is expected to exert influence through its links to more strategic groups and is able to raise issues formally with the Bureaucracy Reduction Group.
- e An Intervention Guidance 'Identifying and Managing Underperformance' has been published, as has the third round National Skills Academy Prospectus.
- f An agreement has been reached for funding for the adult learner account project.

### **Forward Look**

- 6 Key milestones are on track for delivery in the next three months and include the publication of: a Framework for Excellence Policy Paper; the LSC's guidance on sub contracting providers, including an approach to Capacity Building; the National Capital Strategy; and the new guidance for governors on collaboration arrangements. The New Standard for Employer Responsiveness and Vocational Excellence will be refined following feedback from field trials and the Demand led System Consultation will close following a series of consultation events with external partners.

### **Risks and Issues**

- 7 A number of risks and issues are being managed within *agenda for change*.
  - a Following the publication of the KPMG's findings from their review of Framework for Excellence, remedial actions have been taken and the FfE Office are confident of continual improvements to the programme over the next 2-3 months.
  - b There is a risk that each project might work towards an inconsistent set of benefits for the FE System. Particular reference is made by the Project Team on 10/12 (Planning and Funding Provider Capacity and Contestability), where there remains a need to ensure other parts of the reform programme develop in a way that is consistent with the needs of contestability. To address this risk, the Programme Office is working with each project team to ensure interdependencies and benefits remain aligned to those of the programme, with recommendations to the Programme Board for action where appropriate.

- c The Programme Office is supporting colleagues in the Skills Directorate and the *agenda for change* Programme Board to ensure *agenda for change* and the FE System Programme is aligned to meet the challenges emerging from the Leitch Review.

## Clearance

- 8 This paper has been cleared by Ray Dowd, agenda for change Champion.

## Legal implications

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

## Financial implications

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

## Risk management

- 11 There are no risks arising from this paper.

## Communications

- 12 The DfES proposes to publish a report on behalf of Bill Rammell and the Ministerial Standing Group on progress in implementing the FE White Paper. It is currently known as the One Year On Report.
- 13 The LSC has developed a Communications strategy for agenda for change and is working with Cohn and Wolfe, a marketing and public relations firm, to drive forward delivery.
- 14 An LSC led agenda for change External Advisory Group, made up of representatives from across the post-16 sector and the DfES has been set up to provide advice and guidance on agenda for change.

<b>Paper creator</b>	Rebecca Loveday
<b>Date created</b>	9 March 2007
<b>Document ref.</b>	G:\Organisational Data\Business Performance & Development\afc Programme\agenda for change (& FE Review)\02 Programme Mgmt Documentation\Progress Reporting\Reports\Council\nat-agendaforchangeprogressindeliveryofthefewhitepaper-paper-20mar2007.doc