

## Chair's Update

July

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## Meetings and developments since June Board meeting

- 1 Following introductions between the Minister for Schools Nick Gibb and the YPLA Board, the Board were asked to write to the Minister giving their recommendations for improvements to the funding and commissioning system. These recommendations went to Nick Gibb with the agreement of all Board members and observers. The Board reached a significant milestone in achieving this consensus and I am grateful to everyone, Board and executive team alike, for their contributions.
- 2 The Minister took the opportunity of a speech to the Sixth Form Colleges Forum to announce his decision, in line with our recommendation, not to proceed with in-year adjustments so as to reduce bureaucracy and simplify systems. I believe we can take this as a good indication that our advice is considered both appropriate and highly valued. I also believe that because the recommendations came from a consensus view they are significantly more powerful.
- 3 We have now received a full reply to our letter. This has been circulated previously to Board colleagues but is attached for convenience (with my original letter) to this note. Nick Gibb has agreed with the thrust of our recommendations and asked us to work through the detail. The Board will have an opportunity to debate this further at our July meeting and the executive have in the meantime been discussing further with Departmental officials and the Local Government Association.
- 4 Immediately following the June Board meeting Peter Lauener, Neil Flint and I met Lord Hill the Minister with responsibility for Academies. This was another

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positive meeting and we were able to give an appraisal of the current transfer of the operational Academies programme from the DfE to the YPLA. We highlighted the key risks to the programme and in particular the pressing need to complete recruitment of sufficient and sufficiently skilled staff to meet ministerial and stakeholder requirements.

- 5 At that meeting Lord Hill gave us a clear indication that the Government was not setting targets for the number of 'converter' Academies for September and indeed he emphasised the government's broader agenda to give freedom to all front line institutions and this was therefore a matter for school choice.
- 6 This month I asked Board colleagues to tell me the top three things that you think could improve the effectiveness of the 16-19 system. Thank you for your feedback this has helped my preparation for a series of summer conferences on the 16-19 agenda. Your responses are presented in Annex 1 of this paper. The most frequent answer was related to information, advice and guidance. This was closely followed by your ideas for improving systems of funding. I suggest we return to these issues at our September meeting once the way ahead on simplification is clear.
- 7 While we wait for more clarity on the remit of the YPLA I and the executive team have continued to meet with our key partners to maintain a constructive dialogue. In particular this month I have attended regional meetings with ASCL to speak to headteachers and academy principals. My aim at these meetings has been to introduce them to the YPLA and secure a regional conduit for information to get from headteachers to the YPLA so that we collectively better understand the needs of this important stakeholder group.
- 8 I have set out below the usual list of meetings and conferences attended by myself or the senior executive team since the last Board meeting.

Lord Hill – Minister for Academies – Chair, CEO and Neil Flint

David Wootton, Sir Peter Vardy & David Vardy- Durham – Chair

SFCF 16-19 Summer Conference - Cambridge – Chair

SSAT Annual Conference - Raising Achievement and Widening Participation – London – Chair

ASCL/YPLA Regional Headteachers Seminar – Cambridge - Chair

ASCL/YPLA Regional Headteachers Seminar – London – Chair

SSAT London Headteacher Forum – London - Chair

ASCL/YPLA Regional Headteachers Seminar – Birmingham - CEO

ASCL/YPLA Regional Headteachers Seminar – Bristol – Rob Wye (in place of the Chair)

ASCL/YPLA Regional Headteachers Seminar – Manchester – David Pearmain (in place of the Chair)

ASCL/YPLA Regional Headteachers Seminar – York – Chair (substituted)  
ASCL/YPLA Regional Headteachers Seminar – Newcastle – Chair (substituted)

Bishop Burton College – Beverley - CEO  
'Seizing Success' Annual Leadership Conference – Birmingham – CEO  
Richard Williams, Chief Executive of Rathbone – Manchester – CEO  
Bury Council – Bury – CEO  
IAA Strategy Day – London – CEO and Neil Flint  
AoC Summer Reception – London – CEO  
Public Chairs Forum – London – CEO and Rob Wye  
Orchard Hill College – Wallington – CEO  
Federation of Awarding Bodies – London - CEO  
VQ Day Event – London – CEO  
Solihull Local Authority 14-19 team – CEO  
Solihull College (GFE) – CEO  
National Audit Office (introductory meeting) – London - CEO  
Intellect Education Group Meeting – London - CEO  
East of England Regional Planning Group – Birmingham –CEO  
ADCS Annual Conference – CEO (speaking jointly with John Freeman)  
SSAT Academies 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference – London - CEO  
Association of Learning Providers Annual Conference – London CEO

Sixth Form College Forum Liaison Meeting – London – Rob Wye  
The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) – London – Rob Wye  
National Youth Association – Leicester – Rob Wye  
The Richard Lambert Event – London – Rob Wye  
LSIS – London – Rob Wye  
Skills – Third Sector Reference Group – London – Rob Wye  
A Family Affair React Conference – London - Rob Wye  
National Youth Association – Leicester – Rob Wye  
Young Apprenticeships Dinner – London – Rob Wye  
Towards a National Skills Strategy for Charities, Voluntary Groups and Social Enterprises – London – Rob Wye

FE Colleges' Academy Sponsors' Forum - London – Neil Flint  
Oasis Hengrove Academy – Bristol – Neil Flint  
Merchant Academy – Bristol – Neil Flint  
Bristol Brunell (David Carter Academy) – Bristol – Neil Flint  
North Liverpool Academy – Liverpool – Neil Flint  
City Academy – London – Neil Flint  
Bridge Academy - London – Neil Flint  
Petchey Academy – London - Neil Flint  
Bushey Academy – London - Neil Flint

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## Annex A

Strategic Issue	Board comment
<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved currency for pre-vocational learning alongside 'traditional' academic subjects at Level 3, so that applied learning need not be regarded as a route, or a pathway, but rather as a style or process of learning which increases relevance and which can sit alongside other subjects/ choices without compromise to currency for progression.</li> <li>• Clarity around funding arrangements as we increase participation.</li> <li>• Clarity around 16-19 funding into the future.</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum offer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in apprentices in particular at level 4</li> <li>• Clarity in pathways for progression.</li> <li>• Appropriate curriculum (including training) provision for all i.e. get the right qualifications delivered in the right way.</li> <li>• Qualification pathways for 14-19 to include publicly and unequivocally (highly successful) vocational qualifications alongside the existing general, foundation learning, diplomas and apprenticeship routes</li> <li>• Increase the relevance and recognition of learning programmes and qualifications. There is still a mismatch between the education system – and the requirements of employers (and society).</li> <li>• Extend model of curriculum pathways to post 16 provision.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Sixth Form College within easy travelling distance for all 16 year olds</li> <li>• Availability of the most suitable learning programmes and their provision is improved.</li> <li>• Good quality independent IAG (<b><i>better IAG was the most frequent response</i></b>)</li> <li>• Clarity around the government's intentions around post-16 providers - new academies and free schools - can they have post-16?</li> </ul>
<b>People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening learner involvement and 'learner voice' (including former learners and NEETS) to ensure policy, funding and provision matches learner requirements and is fully informed by their needs, ambitions and experiences. Learner involvement provides valuable learning and should be a cornerstone in all providers.</li> </ul>
<b>Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely and accurate information and funding to all sectors of the educational landscape that the YPLA serves.</li> <li>• In year opportunities for young people to participate.</li> <li>• Funding which is fair and does not advantage or disadvantage any sector/institution.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplify funding (could this be as simple as one annual payment for the delivery of x amount of outcomes?)</li> <li>• Reduce number of returns, bureaucracy and financial savings.</li> <li>• Fund against a more flexible and personalised delivery and assessment model.</li> <li>• Review and reform funding methodology to realise the full potential of the QCF credit accumulation system to improve flexibility, personalisation and progression opportunities for young people.</li> <li>• Getting funding to learners and providers as directly as possible, cutting out unnecessary hoops, including the need to constantly bid for funds that should be directed to the frontline and reduce bureaucracy that creates overheads which do not benefit learners.</li> <li>• Removing funding silos and differing funding methodologies that create barriers to flexibility and collaboration, e.g between GFE'S, ISP'S, and special schools for LLDD/SEN, in order to enhance personalisation, choice and value for money outcomes.</li> <li>• Improve 'Real time data'. This will enable accurate assessments of pupil progress and assist in QA of provision which in turn helps commissioning.</li> </ul>
<b>Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity around performance reporting – Framework for Excellence, what next?</li> <li>• Are we able to identify which LAs currently have outstanding provision relative to the others. And are we able to analyse why this is and then use this benchmarking to offer guidance to other LAs?</li> <li>• Establishing sensible performance measures for post 16 providers which encourage an inclusive approach (and discourage exclusive approaches) and are referenced to progress and progression (both at 16 and at 19).</li> <li>• Ensuring that the quality and coherence of Level 1 and Level 2 provision ensures parity with Level 3 in terms of relevance, potential for progression, range of choice and access.</li> </ul>
<b>Climate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better cooperative local area planning for provision and partnership working in general.</li> <li>• A detailed systemic and cultural understanding within the YPLA that the remit for the agency is more that that of the LSC and that its Academy function is important as it appears likely this will grow in the medium term. This would provide reassurance to the Academy Movement and the growing number of Academies and sponsors.</li> <li>• A commitment to create a supportive robust and challenging environment in which Academies can be developed – based on true partnership and collaborative working.</li> <li>• Fuller partnership with employers to provide jobs, traineeships, placements for young people and to sponsor realistic work environments in colleges.</li> </ul>