

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL ‘MAKING IT HAPPEN’ CONSULTATION REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report brings to Members’ attention the Learning and Skills Council’s (LSC) broad findings of the Strategic Area Review of Essex and how they intend to respond to that consultation.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The LSC Essex began the process of the Strategic Area Review in the summer of 2002 and concluded in March 2005. Members may recall that the Strategic Area Review (StAR) consultation document was reported through to the Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee earlier this year. (Minute 20/05).

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 A copy of the LSC Essex ‘Making it Happen’ document has been placed in the Members’ Library at Rayleigh. Key extracts are attached to this report. Appendix 1 identifies the key conclusions for 14-19 year olds while Appendix 2 identifies the key conclusions in connection with 19+ year olds.

4 OFFICER COMMENT

- 4.1 The document is a three-year statement of the LSC’s intentions in response to the findings of the StAR consultation, particularly in terms of development and investment in the Skills for Life agenda.
- 4.2 It has been recognised that work based learning for 14-19 year olds is key. Development around learners continuing in education aims to address some of the issues raised by employers, although there is still a distance to go before businesses will see the benefit. The document signals a review of the configuration of further education colleges in South Essex, with more work around developing links with schools and business. Changing the way businesses perceive further education colleges will be a challenge as employers still favour private training providers to deliver their training needs.
- 4.3 The issues raised through this report will be picked up and progressed locally with contributions, for example, through our own Economic Development Strategy. Through the associated Action Plan attached to the current Economic Development Strategy some 28 employers in Rochford District have already participated in the Profit from Learning scheme this year, with 82 individual learners in total.

- 4.4 'Making it Happen' aims to put Essex at the forefront of the changing education and training requirements for young people and adults.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to Member consideration and comment, officers' comments, as outlined above, be endorsed.

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Background Papers:-

None

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APPENDIX 1

Key Conclusions

LSC Essex Statement of Priorities

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Meeting Skills Needs

The STAR consultation document anticipates many of the issues taken up by the 14-19 White Paper, which, for example, envisages a network of Centres of Vocational Excellence and Specialist Schools. The FE colleges will provide vocational leadership and Specialist Schools will have the ability to become Leading Schools in the drive to boost vocational provision. Closer links have been developing between the sectors in the LSC Essex area. The work of the Specialist Schools Trust and FEDEC will be invaluable in achieving our objectives.

LSC Essex and its stakeholders will be able to build upon the many achievements of the Increased Flexibility Partnerships.

LSC Essex will continue to direct its resources at the sector priorities as set out by the Regional Skills and Competitiveness Partnership and the regional dimension of the LSC, the East of England LSC Regional Team, is enabling the construction of strategic alliances between local LSCs bordering the London, Stansted, Cambridge and Peterborough Growth Area.



Stansted Airport

Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD)

The Strategic Area Review consultation process produced a clear mandate for:

- New opportunities for LLDD to be developed within the LSC Essex area to meet learner needs.
- The improvement of access to and the quality of provision for young disabled learners.
- The identification of other groups of learners where the curriculum offer needs to be improved.

LSC Essex will seek to achieve these objectives and work closely with all stakeholders, particularly the voluntary sector, to:

- Widen opportunities in the LSC Essex area, particularly in the FE sector, which is often the only available route for young people in 11-16 schools wishing to stay in education post 16.
- Commission a feasibility study on the need for a residential school in the LSC Essex area.
- Develop systems of support in the workplace for young learners returning from out of county provision.
- Work with Connexions to streamline the transition and support processes.
- Work with Connexions to enhance the necessary learner data information exchange to ensure young people do not fall through the gaps in the inter agency support network.

The Improving Choice Pathfinder: Leading Local Learning, will be a key driver of LLDD developments in the LSC Essex area.

1.6. Summary of 14-19 Reforming Action

LSC Essex, working strategically with key partners, will:

- Empower local area 14-19 Planning Groups to plan, deliver and monitor the development of the 14-19 Learner Entitlement.
- Ensure that our learners have choice between education and training providers by working where possible with the grain of existing organisational structures, and introducing radical change where needed.
- Await the results of the consultation process on plans to allow more schools to engage in post 16 provision as announced in the 14-19 White Paper.
- Embed regional and national WBL providers into the LSC Essex WBL consortia arrangements.
- Replicate the Prospects new Vocational College in the Thames Gateway South Essex area in the other 2 Gateway areas.
- Develop Young Apprenticeships in Essex.
- Expand the number of Centres of Vocational Excellence.
- Review and reform the FE estate to provide 21st century accommodation.
- Review the configuration of the FE colleges in South Essex.
- Develop new local LLDD opportunities in the LSC Essex area.
- Establish appropriate residential provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

APPENDIX 2

Key Conclusions

Learning and Skills Council, Essex 'Making It Happen'

Strand Four: Reforming the Supply Side

Much of what is proposed above in strands 1 and 2 will support the development of the supply side. However, addressing the Skills for Life issues that prevail within the adult workforce and our local communities remains a formidable challenge.

Whilst the provider network is rising to the challenge of the Skills for Life target, which will upskill those with low levels of literacy and numeracy, we must ensure that the profession is well served in relation to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and that access to career paths are developed in this key area of teaching and learning. We will, therefore, work with a Higher Education provider to develop a Virtual Essex Facility for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for the Skills for Life Sector.

Virtual CPD Facility

This will be a centre of excellence to:

- Promote Skills for Life as a profession.
- Encourage diversity in the workforce.
- Promote CPD.
- Promote good practice.

Embedded Guidance

High quality, relevant and timely guidance is an essential element of the adult learning offer, especially for those who are not engaged in learning. To enable our communities to benefit from learning and skills development the Strategic Board for Information and Guidance will review and provide leadership on guidance for our priority groups in the community and workplace by working with:

- Trade Union Learning Representatives to drive up awareness and opportunity in the workplace.
- The Voluntary and Community Sector, in partnership with the LSC Provider Network, to reach communities who are unaware of the social and economic benefits of learning.

2.6. Summary of 19+ Reforming Action

LSC Essex, working strategically with partners, will:

- Develop Sector Engagement Plans.
- Roll out the National Employer Training Programme through Profit from Learning.
- Review the institutional and delivery structures and collaborative working between providers.
- Drive the Improving Choice Pathfinder – Leading Local Learning.
- Drive action for 'Skills for Employers – the Infrastructure'.
- Establish two Skills Academies.
- Contribute to Inward Investment Packages (Skills).
- Establish a Virtual Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Facility.
- Embed Guidance in the Adult Learner Offer.
- Design new cross sector ways of delivering the new ACL agenda.