Item 1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Members of the Equality and Diversity Committee were welcomed to the meeting for the item on Framework for Excellence.
Item 2. Framework for Excellence

2.1 Roger Marriott presented the consultation proposals for the Framework for Excellence which will be an overarching measure of quality for providers in the learning and skills sector comprising three elements: responsiveness (to learners and employers), effectiveness, and finance. The purpose of the overarching measure is to inform employer and learner choice, provide public accountability to stakeholders, set a standard for excellence, and support self-improvement.

2.2 The committee welcomed the development of an overarching framework and felt it was the right way forward for the sector but recognised that there is much work to do on the detail. The following points were made in discussion:

- The responsiveness measure needs to include an element of ‘reach’ and the extent to which providers are contributing to reducing the numbers of young people and adults not in education employment or training.
- It will be important to develop a framework that can be applied across the whole sector, including school sixth forms although it was recognised that this will be a long-term aim.
- It makes sense to use the 4-point scale as used by the inspectorates to reduce bureaucracy for individual measures but it was agreed that the proposed 5-point scale for the overarching measure allows for better identification of under-performance.
- It was suggested that efficiency could be a better descriptor than finance, and it was recognised that there could be sensitivities about the financial information that providers will be asked to submit.
- The balance between self-assessment and a formulaic approach to the data will be a key factor in determining the overall score and is a major part of the consultation.
- There need to be clearer links between this consultation and the consultation on the national quality improvement strategy, “Pursuing Excellence”, led by the Quality Improvement Agency.

**Action:** The LSC’s draft response to the consultation on “Pursuing Excellence” to be discussed at the next committee meeting

- Equality and Diversity issues should be more explicitly referenced in the document and there should be an impact assessment carried out on the proposals. The committee was assured that all the measures underpinning the Framework for Excellence have an equality and diversity dimension (subsequent documents will refer to these in more detail) and that an impact assessment will be carried out.

Item 3. Schools engagement programme

3.1 The paper on the Schools Engagement Programme was presented by Gareth Griffiths. The purpose of this programme is to tackle potential disengagement from the education system at age 14. The programme is based on lessons and practice learned from the Entry-to-Employment
programme including personalised learning and also includes 2 days work-
experience per week.

3.2 The committee welcomed the focus on tackling disengagement at an earlier
age but were concerned about potential lack of coherence in curriculum
development and employer engagement. The following points were made in
discussion:

- There needs to be a recognition that areas with apparently few problems
can have pockets of need that are not always identified nationally. The
new LSC Partnership Teams will be key in identifying such areas and
ensuring access to resources.

- The voluntary and private sector already work with many of these young
people and need to be brought in to local partnerships to help coherent
delivery. For example many BME young people respond better to
initiatives led by the BME voluntary sector and providers.

- There was concern expressed that employers are being asked (again) to
play a major part in delivering a programme but are not being involved in
leading and developing the programme.

- The LSC’s review of Education Business Links and work-experience
needs to drive forward reform of this part of the system to ensure that
resources are available in terms of funding and expertise.

Item 4. Provision for young offenders under 18

4.1 This paper was presented by Jon Gamble and focused on the way in which
the LSC is developing the learning offer for young people in custody and
mechanisms for ensuring an integrated service as we take over the planning
and funding of the Offender Learning and Skills Service in England.

4.2 The committee welcomed the paper and asked that further reports be
provided as the service develops. The following points were made in
discussion:

- There is great potential for e-learning to benefit offenders (accepting the
issues around internet access in prisons) and the LSC should continue to
explore this area.

- It was recognised that the prison population has a high proportion of
young people that have been in care at some time and a low proportion
of young people that have achieved L2 at age 16. Close working with
partners such as Youth Offending Teams, Connexions services and
Children’s services will be necessary to identify needs.

- The prospect of a unique learner number and a ‘portable’ individual
learning plan in the near future is very encouraging. There was some
concern about data protection but the committee was assured that data
would be held in such a way that access could be limited and that
protocols are in place to do this. The Connexions CCIS database will be
an important part of this system of linked information and there is a
potential risk to the maintenance of this database as the Connexions
service goes through a period of transition.
- Learning and Skills provision is more effective when it is appropriate to the culture and background of young offenders and there is scope for increased voluntary and private sector involvement to deliver this.

**Action:** Jon Gamble to contact Saif Ahmad to look at examples of good practice in the involvement of faith groups in offender learning and skills

### Item 5. Director of Learning’s report

5.1 The issue of the numbers of young people who are NEET was discussed and it was felt that the committee could usefully focus on this area to stimulate innovative thinking.

**Action:** Work with young people who are NEET to be discussed in more depth at a future meeting

5.2 The fact that almost all parts of England had put forward expressions of interest in the Diploma Gateway was welcomed. However the necessary rigour of the process means there will be areas that do not get through the gateway and there is a concern that momentum for reform may be lost in these areas, particularly if funding for the Increased Flexibility Programme is withdrawn at the same time. Jon Coles assured the committee that although the long term aim of the DfES is to have a single 14-19 funding stream it is recognised that ring-fenced funding cannot be removed in the short-term.

5.3 Stuart Gardner was thanked for the work he has put into writing the Director’s report over the last few years.

### Item 6. Sub-groups and task groups

6.1 It was agreed that:

a. Where possible task group meetings would be held after main committee meetings and dates would be agreed for the year ahead

b. Members of YPLC should not be expected to serve on more than one group

c. Task groups should co-opt members from outside the LSC as and when appropriate

d. All groups would consider their terms of reference and select a chairperson from the YPLC members of the group

6.2 Hilary Anslow was thanked for her offer to represent the Committee on the Equality and Diversity Committee sub-group for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### Item 7. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

7.1 The minutes of the YPLC meeting on 25th May 2006 were approved.

7.2 There were no matters arising.

### Item 8. Any other business

8.1 The committee discussed the work being undertaken by Chris Banks to look at the existing formal structures of the LSC non-executive and develop recommendations to the Secretary of State on the best way to minimise
bureaucracy, increase stakeholder engagement and maintain robust accountability.

8.2 The following points were made:
- It is not clear what the case for change is at the national level of the non-executive.
- The YPLC has added value to the work of the LSC over the last 5 years, in particular in helping to develop and drive forward 14-19 reform and there is still much valuable work that the committee is planning to undertake in the future.
- If changes are to be made to the structure of the Council and Committees it will be important to maintain some continuity of membership to ensure that expertise is not lost.
- The committee would have liked to be involved at an earlier stage of the discussion and members were disappointed at the short deadline for their responses.

8.3 Committee members were reminded that they had been asked to feed their views to Chris Banks through the YPLC Chairman and that there would be a full discussion on the recommendations at the National Council meeting on 26th July.

Item 9. Date of next meeting
9.1 The next YPLC meeting will take place on 6th/7th September 2006 at the LSC London Office, 8-10 Grosvenor Gardens, London.

Meeting chair       Maggie Galliers (acting chair)
Minute taker        Debbie Watson
Date created        17 July 2006