Background and introduction

1. The Young People’s Learning Committee is a statutory committee of the Learning and Skills Council established by the Learning and Skills Act 2000 for the purpose of advising the Council on the provision of education and training for young people and the provision of financial resources for their education and training. The FE White Paper published in 2006 proposed the removal of the requirement for statutory committees so that the Council would be able to respond more flexibly to a changing environment. It is likely that the necessary legislative changes to enable this will be enacted during the latter half of 2007.

2. The Chairman of the Council has asked the Committee for their views about historical achievements and the key issues concerning young people that the Council will need to be mindful of, and how the 14-19 champion in the new Council structure should be supported.

Purpose

3. This paper summarises the key issues that the Committee feels that the Council should consider concerning young people and makes recommendations for the new structures.

YPLC Achievements

4. The YPLC has always advocated and articulated the principle of ‘100% for the 100%’, i.e. education and training is for the whole 16-19 cohort, and funding and targets should reflect this. This is a fundamental principle that has now been recognised in the policy to raise the compulsory participation
age to 18 and the implementation of this must remain at the forefront of the Council’s planning.

5 The YPLC has had a significant role in influencing the early stages of policy development through dialogue with Ministers and senior civil servants within the DfES and the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit, as well as being involved in developing formal responses to consultations on government policy, including our recent support for, and input to, raising the participation age. The Council needs to consider how to maintain this dialogue in the new structure, perhaps through regular meetings between the 14-19 champion and Ministers.

6 During the YPLC’s period of existence
   - the achievements of young people have consistently improved
   - the LSC has met its young people’s targets, in particular the Apprenticeship PSA target.

We have also been advocates for
   - improved management information to provide evidence for policy and functional development
   - focussing on value added / distance travelled as a measure of success.

Key issues and recommendations

7 One of the key strengths of the YPLC has been the holistic view it has brought to the consideration of policy due to the range of representation of its members across providers and stakeholders. The strategic and operational collaboration required to deliver the 14-19 entitlement means that it will be important for the Council to continue to bring together this wide range of views nationally and at a regional level to inform and support future developments for young people.

8 The YPLC has been very successful in supporting the re-invigoration of Apprenticeships and the introduction of the Entry-to-Employment and the 14-16 Increased Flexibility Programmes to meet the needs of young people. It will be important that the Council maintains an awareness and understanding of the diversity of talents and aspirations of young people and the need for a corresponding diversity of learning programmes and providers in order to achieve the aim of 100% participation.

9 The YPLC has been effective in highlighting progress and the successes of individual young people and providers but much more needs to be done to communicate the benefits of the new 14-19 curriculum to parents, employers and young people themselves. All Council members will have a key role to play as advocates for 14-19 reform within their sphere of influence.

10 The specific areas of development for young people’s learning that the YPLC recommends the Council needs to retain a focus on over the coming months are:
a Establishing the correct targets and funding routes to drive collaboration across all providers including school sixth forms and academies that may currently feel that they do not need to collaborate, and for all young people including those not currently participating. This includes creating a simpler, more equitable funding system between different providers.
b Identifying the true costs of engaging the disengaged so that funding can be allocated appropriately and in advance of participation.
c Creating a simpler and more coherent curriculum model 14-19.
d Ensuring that the required step change in employer involvement is supported by appropriate planning, funding and infrastructure.
e Monitoring the impact of connexions services transition on the provision of high quality independent information, advice and guidance.
f Maintaining the drive towards cooperation at the strategic level whether this is locally between the LSC and Local Authorities or nationally across government departments and agencies.
g Ensuring that specific issues such as the difficulties of delivering a full entitlement in rural areas, or the impact of cultural practices on the participation of certain groups are addressed as part of a coherent policy.

11 The Council’s role in supporting and challenging the executive should be informed by regular reports from the 14-19 champion who should themselves be supported by a reference group drawn from providers and stakeholders with a cross-section of perspectives.

Clearance
12 Cleared by Ian Ferguson, Chairman YPLC

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