agenda for change: Progress Report
Update on the delivery of the FE White Paper

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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 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, and 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 Issues

5 Following recommendation from the FE System Programme Board, the agenda for change Board is beginning work on the review and rationalisation of the 17 priorities currently being taken forward from the White Paper to ensure they meet the challenges arising from the Leitch Review and will deliver appropriate benefits for the sector.
6 Developing the scorecard and rating (P6) is reporting amber/red but programme planning and control processes are now in place which are routinely used by the programme and its constituent projects, which have resulted in the agreement to de-escalate the programme rating from red to red / amber. The stretch target is to reach Amber / Green status in the next 2 to 3 months.

7 14-19 Raise Attainment (P7) is also reporting Amber / Red and concern still remains over the progress on NEET data and definitions. Agreement on these is required and a DfES NEET action plan and a LSC delivery plan will be developed.

Key achievements

8 The Programme is progressing in line with agreed targets and milestones. Recent key achievements include the following:
   a The publication of the Improvement Strategy and implementation Plan.
   b The Intervention Guidance 'Identifying and Managing Underperformance' was published on 22 January.
   c The policy document for Framework for Excellence and the draft handbook to support providers as they develop learner involvement strategies has also been published.
   d The Practitioner Panel has been established and the definition of the September Guarantee for schools agreed.
   e The Demand led Funding consultation has concluded (following 19 successful, joint DfES/LSC led external events), and the first stage of the level 3 entitlement development and implementation (including the publication of the draft funding guidance) is completed.
   f The Capital Prospectus has been published and it was agreed to Grant Fund the AoC to produce guidance and best practice on non-teaching cost efficiencies. A first proposal on self-regulation from the sector has been received and a Good Governance Practice guide launched. The Information Standards Authority has agreed data to be collected in 2007-8.
   g Stakeholder events were held for the Data and MIAP priority, which had good attendance and positive feedback.

Forward Look

9 Key milestones are on track for delivery in the next three months and include:
   • the prototype of the framework and supporting draft guidance on developing the scorecard and rating which are scheduled to be published in June.
   • agreement of the FESP and SSPB roles and responsibilities for Learner Accounts and Demand Led Funding
   • preparation to take place on both the learner accounts and demand led funding priorities ready for the OGC Gateway 0, which will be held on 12 – 14 June.
   • the finalisation of arrangements for whole system testing of Learner Accounts and Demand Led Funding.

10 Activity is underway for a substantive draft of the Capital Strategy and regional capital strategies by the end of April, with external publication in May / June. Another future milestone is the confirmation of initial recommendations for extending provider eligibility on the Capital Strategy and the launch of the first stage of the client capability programme.
The agreement of the detailed deliverables for the pilot Data Service, ministerial clearance for the Information Authority (IA) protocol, instructions to LSC and DfES policy staff regarding interactions with the IA and ministerial approval for the IA’s Board chair selection are also on track.

The work on mapping future activities within the sector up until 2010 on the MIAP plan is continuing, as are the alignment of Business Change activities with LogicCMG and the issue of LSC & DfES fair processing notices.

Risks and Issues
13 A number of risks and issues are being managed within agenda for change:
   a Although work is progressing on the assessment of Leitch, there remains a risk to the programme that the impact on available resources prevents full delivery of the revised programme.
   b A significant risk has been identified for the Framework for Excellence arising from the gap between budget plans for 2007-08 and available resources. To address this, proposed budgets are being quality assured and mitigation action and contingency plans will be prepared.
   c There is also an issue arising from the work to embed the Leitch Review within the Programme, where the ability of the sector to deliver the outcomes within the expected timescales is still to be assessed.

Clearance
14 This paper has been cleared by Rob Wye, Director, Strategy and Communications Group.

Legal implications
15 There are no legal implications arising from this paper.

Financial implications
16 There are no financial implications arising from this paper.

Risk management
17 There are no risks arising from this paper.

Communications
18 The DfES will shortly be publishing 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.
19 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.
20 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.