LSC Statement of Priorities 2009/10 - 2010/11

Date of issue 5 September 2008
Audience National Council

LSC office National Office
Publication intent Internal
Internal paper ref LSC 43/2008
Agenda reference 4

Background and introduction

1 This paper sets out the main issues in relation to the production of the LSC’s annual Statement of Priorities, including:

   • The process for producing and publishing the Statement.
   • The key policy issues to be presented in the Statement.

2 The Statement of Priorities for 2009 /10 – 2010/11 is essentially a continuation of Priorities for Success 3. The policy imperatives remain very much as set out in PfS3 with some changes in emphasis as we move towards the implementation of major new services such as the National Apprenticeships Service and the Integrated Employment and Skills programme. The overall budgets remain as defined in PfS3 although there are some changes due to funding pressures in both 16 -18 and 19+ provision.

3 A draft version of the Statement will be circulated to LSC National Council members in week commencing 8th September. Following this it is recommended that the final sign off of the Statement is delegated to the Chairman.
Recommendation

4 National Council is asked to note the issues raised in this paper and to agree to the recommendation that the Statement of Priorities for 2009 / 10 – 2010/11 be signed off on behalf of the Council by a sub Group led by the Chairman.

Key points/issues

Producing the Statement of Priorities

5 Following discussions between the LSC, DIUS and DCSF we have agreed the following remit and goals for the LSC Annual Statement of Priorities:
   - The target audience is heads of institutions / providers and other partners that have to deliver the priorities and targets.
   - The document needs to give the audience an overview of the policy and funding information they need to plan provision and negotiate funding for 2009/10.
   - Policy statements will be confined to those that will have an operational impact on providers in 2009/10.
   - The content of the document will be limited to those items that deliver on the agreed remit and goals.

6 In terms of overall format and presentation the document will follow the lines of the Statement of Priorities for 2008/09 to 2010/11 (‘Priorities for Success 3’). The document will be divided up into three main sections: ‘Targets and Priorities’, ‘Investment Strategy’, and ‘Implementation’. The section on Implementation is a change from the current Statement and will set out the processes and timescales for agreeing allocations to providers from each of the main funding streams.

7 Ministers have indicated that in contrast to previous versions they would wish to personally set out clear messages on direction and investment in the first section of the document although it will remain the LSC’s Statement of Priorities.

8 The production of the Statement is linked directly to the publication of the Grant Letter issued jointly by the Secretaries of State for DIUS and DCSF. The intention was for the Grant letter to be signed off by 29th September and for the Statement of Priorities to be published in week commencing 13th October, but ministers have now indicated that this may slip to November.

9 Publication of the Statement by the middle of October would have enabled the overall planning and allocations process to be brought forward from the
timetable adopted for 2008/09; however, we have contingency and scenario plans in place to cope with a November publication.

10 The LSC submitted a first draft of the Statement on schedule to DIUS and DCSF, and following feedback we are now finalising the draft to be submitted to Ministers. The draft submitted to Ministers will be circulated to the LSC National Council for comment in week commencing 8th September.

11 The overall policy direction for both 16 – 18 and 19+ provision remains broadly as expressed in the Statement of Priorities for 2008/09.

16 – 18 Provision

12 The key challenges addressed in the Statement of Priorities in relation to 16 – 18 provision include:

- Maintaining growth in the rate of participation as the overall 16 – 18 cohort decreases in number.
- Working with providers and partners to ensure that there are accessible, high quality learning opportunities for all young people.
- Identifying those young people who face particularly complex and deep rooted barriers to learning and working with partners to ensure that we can overcome these barriers.
- Meeting the needs of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Extending the learner Guarantee to 17 year olds.
- Narrowing the gap in attainment at every level between those in high income and low income households.
- Continue to deliver the 14 – 19 reforms.
- Preparing for the transition to new arrangements for planning and managing provision from September 2010.

19+ Provision

13 The key challenges addressed in the Statement of Priorities in relation to 19+ provision include:

- Growth in Apprenticeships participation as we build towards the 1 in 5 target, including the launch of the new National Apprenticeships Service and the National Vacancy Management System.
- The development and roll out of Skills Accounts.
- The introduction of the new Adult Advancement and Careers Service.
- The development and roll out of the new Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) service.
- The continued growth of the Train to Gain programme.
- Maintaining the safeguard on aspects of adult learning.
- Promoting and supporting the overall improvements in the level of fee income secured by providers.
Integrated Employment and Skills / Skills for Work

14 The policy set out in *Work Skills* by the Secretaries of State for DWP and DIUS commits the Government and related agencies to help over 100,000 people to gain sustainable employment and to achieve a recognised qualification in 2010-11. Trials for the new programme will need to operate from 2009-10 and to help the sector to gear up for full scale delivery in 2010-11 we will need to flag up in the 2009/10 Statement of Priorities the changes that will be made to current programmes and funding streams to enable us to support delivery of the targets.

Communications

15 As stated above, it was intended that the Statement of Priorities would be launched in the week commencing 13th October – this timetable may now need to be revised. The launch will cover the publication, in hard copy and online, of the document and a range of launch events involving the LSC and Ministers.

16 Briefing events for LSC staff in regions and in National Office will start early in October, enabling early contact between Partnership Teams and providers.

17 Provider briefing events will take place in each region – the dates for these will depend on the timescale for publication.

Clearance

18 This paper has been cleared by the National Director of Young People’s Learning and Skills, the National Director of Funding, Planning and Performance and the Council Solicitor.

Legal implications

19 Under the Learning and Skills Act the Council is required to make and publish a plan for each academic year. This plan must include proposals as to how the Council intends to achieve in the academic year any objectives which should be achieved in the year in conformity with any directions given by the Secretary of State in exercise of his powers under s25 of the Learning and Skills Act or any conditions imposed on the grant under s27 of the Learning and Skills Act.
20 The Council is also required to formulate a strategy in relation to its functions and keep it under review. The Council must have regard to the strategy in exercising its functions. The strategy must include proposals as to how the Council intends to develop the skills of persons in employment and how it intends to achieve any objectives contained in directions of the Secretary of State.

21 The LSC’s Statement of Priorities incorporates the Council’s annual and strategic plans to meet the statutory requirements imposed on the Council.