Background and introduction

1 The provisions of the Further Education and Training Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) requiring the Council to establish committees to be called regional learning and skills councils for each area of England specified by the Secretary of State came into force on 1 September 2008.

Purpose

2 The purpose of this paper is to ask the Council to formally establish nine regional learning and skills councils and specify the functions that they should carry out in their region. The Council is also asked to abolish the Regional Boards.

Recommendation

3 The Council is recommended to;


- specify that the regional councils carry out the functions set out in Appendix A;
• give consent to the regional councils to delegate functions to members of staff of the regional council;

• delegate to the Chief Executive the preparation of guidance for regional councils;

• abolish the 9 Regional Boards.

**Key points/issues**

4 The requirement for the Council to establish committees for each area of England specified by the Secretary of State to be called regional learning and skills councils came into force on 1 September 2008.

5 The areas in relation to which regional councils must be established are the same as the areas currently covered by the Regional Boards.

6 Regional councils must perform in relation to its area such of the Council’s duties and powers as the Council specifies. Appendix A sets out the duties and powers which the Council is recommended to specify regional councils should carry out.

7 The legislation provides that the Council must prepare guidance for each regional council. The guidance must include objectives which the regional council should achieve in carrying out its functions and set a regional council’s budget for the financial year. The Council must consult the regional development agencies and local authorities on the guidance. The guidance for this financial year must be prepared as soon as reasonably practicable. The Council is asked to delegate the preparation of the guidance to the Chief Executive.

8 Regional councils can delegate their functions to the chair of the regional council. A regional council can also delegate its functions to a member of its staff with consent of the Council. The Council is therefore asked to give consent to regional councils to delegate functions to its staff.

**Legal implications**

9 The legal implications are set out in the paper.

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Appendix A

Functions of Regional Councils

1. Agreeing regional priorities.

2. Agreeing regional capital priorities and regional capital strategies.

3. The appointment of a person to be a member of the governing body of a further education corporation within its region under s11 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (the 2000 Act);

4. Endorsing capital proposals for approval by the Chief Executive, National Capital Committee and National Council.

5. Making and publishing proposals for the establishment or dissolution of Further Education Corporations.

6. Making proposals to change the organisation of a school with regard to school sixth form provision.

7. The final decision on 16 to 19 competitions.

8. Monitoring and evaluating LSC performance on a regional basis.

9. Supporting and challenging the Regional Director in decision making on a regional basis.

10. Assuring the effectiveness of regional and local systems of control, risk management and governance, including those controls that secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.