NOTE OF KEY POINTS

- The Council welcomed Maggie Galliers, Principal of Leicester College, as a new member of Council.
- The Statement of Priorities was with the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, and he was expected to consider it shortly. A publication date was yet to be finalised due mainly to the document’s reliance on the content of the Pre-Budget Report.
- In his regular update, the Chief Executive reported that development of the YPLA was going well, although the SFA was at a less advanced stage. It was hoped that the new Minister, Sion Simon, would send a communication to LSC staff before Christmas with an update.
- The Finance and Performance Report showed a 1% overspend, having moved from a 1% underspend at the time of the previous report. Management action was required on admin budgets to mitigate any potential overspend. Members noted concern around the capital budget, especially given the additional pressures from the economic downturn. There was added pressure from a lack of scope for flexibility across the main budget lines. The main point to note on performance was the strong growth in young people’s participation, which stood at several percentage points above the plan. It was evident from the figures that young people were choosing the school and college route, which could have an impact on apprenticeships.
- Council noted an update around Education Maintenance Allowances. Following a period of intense activity to clear the backlog of applications, it was expected the backlog would be cleared very soon. An internal review of the situation and how it arose was to be undertaken by National Council member Claire Ighodaro.
- In an update on Apprenticeships, the Council noted a number of measures the LSC was taking to respond to the economic downturn. User testing of the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service was ongoing, and it was hoped to be able to begin populating the system by early December. Providers were being primed for a January launch.
- The Apprenticeship marketing campaign was to commence from February 2009, targeting the individual and raising awareness of skills. Taking its place in November was a refreshed Train to Gain campaign, emphasising the service’s ability to support business.
- A Train to Gain package of support for Small and Medium Enterprises to enable them to offer training more easily had been agreed and would be implemented in early January 2009. An Ofsted report into the service had been generally positive.
- Council approved the Capital Committee’s recommendations for both Applications in Principle and Applications in Detail from its September meeting. A decision on the recommendations from the Committee’s October meeting was deferred until the Council’s next meeting due to concerns about long-term affordability.
- Council reviewed and endorsed the proposed Capital Skills Prospectus.
- Council noted a paper for information reporting on the provision for young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.