NOTE OF KEY POINTS

- The Leitch review of skills had been published the previous day, so the Council received a briefing on its contents and the expected impact on the LSC of the report’s recommendations. The overriding principle in the report was a recommended move to “demand-led” rather than “planned” provision. Council agreed that the direction of travel outlined in the report was to be welcomed, but they did have a number of questions mainly about detail and implementation which were logged.

- In a presentation about the LSC’s role as Market Maker, and Strategic Commissioning, Council noted the LSC’s central role in understanding demand, need and supply while encouraging new providers to enter the market. The LSC has an interest in the entire market whether it be employer, individual or state funded. Strategic commissioning aimed to align national priorities with regional ones. Also, to increase employer and learner choice, increase responsiveness, introduce greater competition in the system and improve quality. The commissioning framework would be structured nationally, regionally and locally, with a clear set of high level rules for investment at a national level driving regional and local priorities.

- In his Management Group’s Report to Council, Mark Haysom highlighted updates on the Youth Cohort Study, vision for the FE system, Train to Gain and performance reviews. The regional performance reviews in particular had highlighted some key issues which would be discussed with Council at a later date.

- The Financial Performance Report broadly showed no over-spends and marginal under-spends. There was currently a £50m under-spend on capital being forecast for the year end, although capital spend can be carried forward. Management Group were looking at the reasons behind a fall in spend on the Entry to Employment scheme. Council noted a revised approach to regional budget allocation which was designed to move away from historic budget baselines. The new method will now be based on targets, with regions taking their own decisions over demand and need.

- Capital proposals were agreed for Colchester Institute, Harrow College and East Durham and Houghall College.

- Council noted an information paper summarising the provisions in the Further Education and Training Bill.

- Council also noted a paper detailing the progress made towards an integrated marketing and communications campaign for learning and skills.