

WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Board of Directors – 8 June 2007

**The Regional Approach to Post 16 Education, Training and Skills
Strategic Review - Progress Report**

Report on Behalf of the Review Panel

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Board with an outline of the progress to date in the Strategic Review of The Regional Approach to Post 16 Education, Training and Skills.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Board note the update.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following an approach by David Cragg, Regional Director, Learning and Skills Council (LSC) it has been agreed to carry out an additional strategic review. The LSC are providing £20,000 to support the review process. The review will not duplicate existing accountability arrangements but is intended to contribute to the development of partnership arrangements and to the understanding of how skills issues impact across the region in terms of policy areas and geography.

- 3.2 The Panel considered the objectives of the review which had been agreed with the Learning and Skills Council. It was agreed that the initial list of ten objectives could be simplified in to four terms of reference as follows:-

- To establish a baseline understanding of national policies on post 16 education, skills and training.
- To establish a baseline understanding of performance and intelligence data relating to post 16 education, skills and training in the West Midlands region.
- To examine the alignment, collaboration and integration of policies and practices relating to post 16 education, skills and training in the West Midlands region.
- To examine the implementation and operation of policies, practices and resources relating to post 16 education, skills and training in the West Midlands region.

4. **Review Panel and further process issues**

4.1 The current Review Panel consists of:

Cllr Phillip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
Mike Bell	Learning and Skills Council
Mike Beasley	Chair of the Regional Skills Partnership and the Regional Learning and Skills Council
David Brown,	Director of Children's Services Walsall MBC and Chair of Regional Directors of Children's Services Group
Liz Eyre	Worcestershire County Council - Cabinet Member for Children Services (co-opted)
Yann Lovelock	Faiths Forum
Cllr Jo Jones	Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council
Cllr Mick Jones	Warwickshire County Council
Ioan Morgan	Principal The Warwickshire College
Roger McKenzie	TUC
Fraser Mitchell	West Midlands Business Council
Cllr Chris Saint	Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Warwickshire County Council Culture Portfolio holder - West Midlands LGA
Cllr Paul Tilsley	Birmingham City Council
Bruce Undy	West Midlands Business Council

Cllr Jo Jones was appointed Chair of the Panel. Mike Bell was appointed as Vice Chair.

4.2 The Panel are supported by the Assembly Scrutiny Team.

5. **Progress to date**

5.1 Timescales for the review are as follows

March - April 2007	Preparation
May – July 2007	Evidence Gathering
September 2007	Consultation
October 2007	Final Report to LSC/Assembly

5.2 The Panel held it's first meeting on 18 May 2007 agreed

- Panel hearings should usually be held as half day sessions preferably commencing at 11 am and that a programme of meetings would be drawn up and circulated to all panel members
- The next hearing would enable the panel to establish a baseline understanding of national policies on post 16 education, skills and training and would consist of a briefing together with a briefing paper circulated in advance of the meeting.
- The second hearing would enable the panel to establish a baseline understanding of performance and intelligence data relating to post 16 education, skills and training in the West Midlands region.

- The likely need for workshop sessions to enable several organisations to contribute evidence at the same time. One session identified would relate to how skills contribute to the work environment and should include representatives from trades unions, EEF, the Business Council and the federation of Small Businesses.
- That smaller sessions involving selected panel members meeting particular organisations or individuals before reporting back to the main panel may be appropriate.
- Evidence gathering by officers of the Assembly would also be important.
- Carmel Kerr be invited to address the panel on equalities issues relating to skills and in particular the responsibility of education to respond to its related legislative requirements
- Representatives of the Youth Parliament be invited to contribute to the review.

Contact Details:

John Wright - Policy Officer (Scrutiny and Strategic Review)

0121 678 1054

j.wright@wmra.gov.uk