

# **Telford and Wrekin School Improvement Team**

## **Response to Lyons Enquiry: Leitch Review of Skills**

### **Governance**

- *With their new strategic leadership role, how can local authorities relate most effectively to a reformed Learning and Skills Council on 14-19 education issues?*

It is essential that Local Authorities collaborate fully with their reformed LSC, in the context of a strong 14-19 Partnership, and a strong framework to support Lifelong Learning to ensure alignment of policy, planning and funding. Without co-ordination and collaboration there could be a danger of over-investment in traditional technologies and skills, and a time delay on the supply side. The reformed Connexions service linked to proposed new provision for adult careers guidance will be a key bridge and source of data.

In a demand-led environment, the LA should have stronger representation on planning forums at regional and national levels, at least equal to that of the LSC.

### **Convening**

- *What links need to be made between employment and skills provision, and other local services and responsibilities?*

We believe that a move to a demand-led model will necessitate local planning to ensure best value, equity and learner progression. It will be important to extend successful models of 14-19 partnership to include adult education and training. Looking at the proposals from the viewpoint of the individual, links need to be made particularly with transport; and with mechanisms for providing reliable information, advice and guidance. It would be beneficial for local labour market information to be more readily accessible to individuals, and providers of education and training perhaps through an augmented Area Prospectus.

Direct engagement with employers and their organizations could be enhanced by a national debate about the remit of Education Business Partnerships, and of their relationships with other key partners.

- *What role should local authorities play in a new demand-led skills system?*

First of all, local authorities should be models of good practice as employers, in all areas and functions. There are clear issues here for business re-modeling, and for local HR practices.

LA's should continue to play a key role in the drive to improve functional, personal and learning skills; and in raising standards, particularly amongst the most vulnerable. They will also have a key co-coordinating role in ensuring that school-leavers are equipped to succeed in an uncertain future, not least by being committed to life-long learning. Through the new Youth Offer, the LA will have a central coordinating role in ensuring that young people engage in the widest possible range of opportunities where they can further develop skills for employment and citizenship.

LA's have a role to play in ensuring that the generic skills employers require are taught from an early age and are achieved by all school leavers.

- *What role should local authorities play in the proposed Employment and Skills Boards, to ensure skills and employment issues are properly linked to wider work on economic prosperity and development?*

Local authorities should provide a clear, informed perspective on local and regional economic development and planning issues. They should ensure that schools are aware of and responsive to labour market

changes and trends, and to the views and experience of employers. As strategic leaders of local 14-19 partnerships, LA's are best placed ensure that in delivering the national Entitlement, the capacity and balance of Specialised Diploma and other vocational and applied learning provision meets the present and future needs of the local community.

## Funding

- *What implications for local authority funding do the Leitch recommendations or related proposals have?*

To achieve best value, there would appear to be the need for further opportunities to align funding both within the LA, and between the LA and other key partners.

While there is a clear need for LA's to continue to "work smarter", the implications of Leitch also point to the necessity for some increased capacity, particularly to facilitate the strengthened leadership and partnership roles outlined above.