

Executive Member for Children's Services 16 May 2006 **and Advisory Panel**

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

Skills Centre update

Purpose of Report

1. This report advises the Executive Member of the progress being made around the development of a skills centre on the Danesgate site.

Background

2. In November 2005, members were advised of the developments planned for the Danesgate site, including the building of a vocational skills centre, primarily for 14-16 year olds who needed targeted and personalised approaches to work-related learning to improve their likelihood of progression into post-16 provision. The building costs for the centre are being largely met by a successful targeted capital fund grant provided by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and with some devolved capital grant funding.
3. The project is overseen by a project board and a steering group of partners, both of which are chaired by the Assistant Director (Access & Inclusion). The steering group has been very valuable in ensuring that the development is thoroughly integrated into the strategic plans of partners and providers within the overarching 14-19 education and training strategy. The steering group has a work plan which includes consultation, stakeholder engagement, the development of an appropriate curriculum and extended use of the facilities.

Progress

4. The Executive Member for Resources confirmed the retention of the Danesgate site for educational use in January 2006. This allowed the development to enter the planning phase. Consultation events have been held within the ward, including an open meeting for residents, and the community has also been engaged through representation on the management committee for the site. The informal consultation has been generally positive, although residents will await the formal planning process and the more detailed plans before they can accurately quantify what impact, if any, the development may have on them.
5. The Learning and Skills Council for North Yorkshire funded a stakeholder consultation programme, including young people from the city's schools. The outcome of the consultation has helped to refine some aspects of the scheme, giving greater clarity over how the skills

centre will fit into the overarching 14-19 education and training strategy and ensuring that there is widespread support for the vocational areas on offer.

6. A further consultation event took place on April 28th as a part of the city's 14-19 education and training strategy development day. The workshop provided at this event allowed partners, stakeholders and other parties to be updated with progress and contribute to the overall shape of the scheme.
7. The steering group has produced a brochure about the centre to use in any future publicity. The first major use of the brochure will be in early June, when the steering group are hosting a business breakfast for local employers and others who might be able to support the development of skills in the young people using the centre. Already a number of large local firms have expressed an interest in the development of the centre.
8. The timetable for the development is as follows:
 - April 2006 Planning application submitted
 - August 2006 Go out to tender
 - November 2006 Construction begins
 - September 2007 Handover
9. In order to move forward the work plan, the current work-related learning budget includes an element for staffing and consultancy support. This will give the steering group the temporary capacity they require to deliver the scheme effectively.

Financial implications

10. The current budget for work-based learning delivered through the Access & Inclusion service arm is £181k for 2006/07. This currently covers all of the fees paid to external partners to deliver work-related learning programmes and the support required to sustain young people in provision. The current provision is part time for almost all young people accessing partners' programmes.
11. Following approval from the Schools' Forum to redirect funding within the Dedicated Schools Grant, the approved budget is set at £231k for 2007/08 and this will allow for increased provision for young people. The new centre will contribute to this increased service with all revenue costs contained within this new budget level. Previously, the DfES assessed local authorities on the performance against the delivery of full time education to permanently excluded pupils. They now recognise that this measure does not take into account the large number of young people nationally who are not excluded but who do not attend school. The government's aim is full time education for all young people, regardless of where they are placed or why they are out of school.
12. The DfES have recommended that each local authority establish a 'collaborative' with their secondary schools from September 2007. The

'collaborative' is a mechanism whereby the secondary schools have more influence over the number of places purchased in provision for pupils with emotional difficulties in order to ensure that all pupils out of school are able to access 5 days each week of alternative provision. York secondary schools Headteachers have been informed of this recommendation, which will be progressed from the already well-established protocol for hard to place pupils operated jointly by the secondary schools and the local authority.

13. The aim is to develop a formula based approach to funding that will sit alongside the main schools' funding formula. Any proposed revised funding formula will need to be brought to the Schools' Forum for consultation and to the Executive Member for approval.

Legal implications

14. There are legal implications associated with this report.

Human Resource implications

15. Currently, partners provide education and training for young people on their own premises or through accredited employers. The local authority purchases provision from those providers and employs staff to monitor the welfare and progress of the young people. The skills centre will be run and managed by the local authority but there will be three groups of staff within the centre. The first group will consist of staff specifically employed to work in the centre and this group is likely to consist of a centre manager and some administrative support. The second group will consist of local authority staff already working with these young people but who currently support them in partner institutions. For these staff there will be no change in the nature of the work, and therefore the skill set or qualifications required but there may be a change in base and line management. The third group will consist of staff time bought in from partner organisations, such as York College. The local authority will formally contract with partners to deliver specific vocational programmes within the centre. These staff will continue to be employed by their host organisation but will work under the day to day supervision of the centre manager. This will require a formal protocol to be agreed between the partners and the local authority.

Recommendations

16. The Executive member is recommended to note this report and the arrangements set out in it.

Legal	
Financial	
Human Resources	
Crime and Disorder	
Sustainability	
Equalities	
Other	

Contact Details**Author:**

Murray Rose
Assistant Director (Access & Inclusion)
Tel: 01904 613161 x 4203

Chief Officer responsible for the report:

Patrick Scott
Director of Learning, Culture and Children's
Services

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

The Skills Centre brochure (tabled at the meeting)