

Annex B: Local consultation paper

Raising Expectations: A Whole Authority Response.

1. Introduction

This consultation paper is a direct response to the publication by the government of *Raising Expectations: staying in education and training post 16*, the Green Paper proposing that the participation age for young people should be raised to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015. The Green Paper envisages incremental progress towards these targets during the intervening years, which is why action is needed more urgently than might otherwise be imagined.

Raising Expectations recommends that 'local authorities will need to use their own projections of year groups sizes and modelling of choices young people are likely to make to plan provision in their own area'. The intention of this paper is to identify the scale of the challenge facing York and to make some initial projections about how demand is likely to change over time and what kind of provision will be needed to meet these changing demands. By implication, it presents a challenge to the current 14 – 19 Strategy developed by the Lifelong Learning Partnership, and offers an opportunity to review and up-date policy.

The paper seeks to describe the annual cohort of young people leaving school at 16, and to provide an estimate of the numbers likely to fall into any of the sub categories that are used to analyse need. It should be stressed that these are merely projections, and that part of the intention in producing a paper of this kind is to invite challenge as the best way of arriving at a shared understanding of the problem.

2. The Data

There are a number of significant problems in describing the nature of the cohort, most of which arise from the differences between the various data sets currently in use.

It is not difficult to estimate the total numbers of young people leaving Year 11 (Annex 1). This shows a year on year decline from a peak in September 2007. A crude analysis of this would suggest that, even with a participation rate of 100% and allowing for increased Year 13 retention, sufficient capacity exists within the system if September 2006 is used as the benchmark for the supply of places in Education and Training. Although this benchmark provides a convenient measure, it almost certainly underestimates capacity because it does not take account of the effect of declining numbers in 11 - 18 schools which is making space available that could be used for Post 16 provision.

However, the challenge for the authority lies not so much in managing the total capacity as in finding appropriate provision to meet changing need. This

requires a more sophisticated analysis of the data to identify the characteristics of different groups of young people.

Action Point: It is recommended that Connexions, the LSC and the Local Authority liaise with each other to develop a single, more detailed analysis of future trends in Post 16 provision, based on the assumptions outlined in this paper.

Three key target groups are identified in this paper to set the terms for the debate. These are young people:

- Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET).
- In employment with and without training (including apprenticeships at level 2 and level 3).
- In Education and Training.

The data currently available does not make it easy to be clear about the nature and size of each of these groups.

It is proposed that the NEET group should be taken to include all those young people likely to be within the new DfES definition of NEETs (i.e. including those that are in the voluntary sector and those not currently in contact with the authorities). For the purposes of the analysis it will be helpful if these sub categories are separately identified within the general umbrella of NEETs.

In the Connexions data, the group of young people, described as being 'in employment' includes some who receive no training, some who receive training which is not accredited and some who receive accredited training. Again, it is helpful if these sub categories can be identified within the general category of those in employment.

The third category used in the Green Paper ('in Education and Training') is split between 'in school' and 'in FE'. It would be helpful if the distinction was also made between the number following level 2 courses and the number following at least one option at level 3, perhaps by creating a matrix with the type of institution on one axis and the level of work on the other.

In projecting numbers, the MIS group is requested to model numbers in Y12, and in Y13, separately and together, making an informed estimate of the numbers that are dropping out of Education and Training altogether at age 17 (i.e. before Year 13). For the purposes of this paper, the assumption is being made that retention rates in York are similar to the rest of the country and that whilst some of the 'drop out rate' can be attributed to course changes, there is and will continue to be an impact on the number of young people who are NEET.

Finally, it is assumed that whilst there are young people who are NEET in every area of the city, they are concentrated in particular in Acomb, Clifton and Tang Hall. An analysis by area will help to establish whether this is, in fact, the case.

3. Target Group 1: Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET)

Currently, the number of NEETs in York is relatively low by comparison with national figures. A full year cohort is about 2,000 (declining to 1,700 over the next few years). In most years roughly 100, or 5% of the cohort, are likely to become NEET immediately on leaving school. The broader definition of NEET that the DfES is proposing to introduce will probably raise this to about 160 or 8%.

In order to understand the full nature of the challenge that we face, this figure needs to be doubled in order to take account of Y13 (17 – 18 year olds) and then increased to take account of the numbers that drop out of education and training altogether before they are 18. It is likely that, on current figures, the total number of young people in this category will be somewhere between 350 and 400. Demographic decline means that the figure will drop by 10% – 15% over the next 7 years to roughly 300 – 350.

What we know about the characteristics of this group is that whilst some are simply drifting, a great many of them have significant personal problems in their lives. Young people are significantly more likely to be NEET if they:

1. have learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD)
2. come from the Traveller community
3. are leaving care
4. are teenage mothers
5. have already been permanently excluded from mainstream education

A considerable proportion of these young people will be under supervision by the Youth Offending Team and been disengaged from education and training pre 16. The YOT is responsible for about 100 16 – 17 year olds of whom only about 30% are in Education and Training.

Because about 50 pupils are permanently excluded from mainstream education every year, a significant number (well over 100) of these young people will have been through the PRU or Rathbone.

Many of them will have multiple problems and appear in more than one of the categories identified above. Other characteristics of the group are that they are more likely to be homeless, to have a history of substance misuse, to have significant mental problems, and to come from severely dysfunctional home backgrounds.

Many of these young people have been at the margins of the education system during their time in school and it is not easy to describe the kind of Post 16 provision that is likely to be more successful in re-engaging them once they have passed the statutory school leaving age.

Although some of these young people will be able to transfer into employment with training or into full time level 2 courses in school or college, a significant number (perhaps the majority) are likely to need provision that is much more tightly structured, supervised and supported. This kind of provision is unlikely

to be on employer's premises but will have to be significantly different from most of what is currently available as education or training. Perhaps the closest model that we have at the moment is the provision that will be made at the Skills Centre from September 2007 for 14 – 16 years olds.

It is likely to have the following key characteristics:

- Even though courses may need to be constructed around quite specific vocational areas and lead to accredited qualifications, the focus for the learning outcomes will have to be on generic skills and allow planned transfer to a variety of different courses at 17+;
- It will need to be highly personalised both for the individual and for small groups;
- It will almost certainly need to make available a mix and match of qualifications of different kinds from entry level to level 2;
- It will need to be flexible, both in the sense that it will need to be responsive to the needs and demands of the young people themselves and in the sense that it may not be helpful for it to be made within a big educational institution. There may well be a strong case for outreach provision in community centres, youth centres, and training premises that do not have a necessary connection with education;
- It may need to be locally available.

A version of such a curriculum offer is attached at Annex 2.

Consultation:

Question 1:

What proportion of the NEET group are likely to access each of the different kinds of provision identified above:

- Employment with training
- School or College based level 2 courses
- A new kind of outreach provision

Question 2:

What are the characteristics of the LDD group and what kind of provision do they need?

4. Target Group 2: In employment with and without training.

This is currently a relatively small group of young people. Indeed, the figures suggest that those in employment without training is in single figures. As a category, however, this group of young people presents a number of challenges.

It is probable that the actual provision being made for some of those currently labelled as in employment with training may need to change significantly in

order to make sure that the training is formally accredited in one or other of the variety of ways that is proposed in the Green Paper.

It is also important to take views about the extent to which young people are more likely to be attracted into apprenticeships if the system is overhauled. This is not easy to judge. Apprenticeships are popular with young people, but it can be difficult to persuade employers to participate. There is an absence of frameworks in some key areas and some employers feel that young people do not have a sufficiently high level of skills when they enrol to benefit from the opportunities that are available. Before there is a general willingness to expand the number of apprenticeships that are available at all levels, attention may need to be given to the provision of pre-apprenticeship programmes of study.

Consultation:

Question 1:

Is there likely to be an increase in the number of young people seeking employment with training either through apprenticeships or through other routes? If so, what might be the scale of the increasing demand (% of cohort and/or numbers)?

Question 2:

What work needs to be done with employers locally to ensure that accredited training is available and what are the implications of this for current providers of Education and Training?

5. Target Group 3: In Education and Training.

Although a small number of young people in the city are following entry level and level 1 courses provided by the colleges, the great majority can be divided between those following level 2 courses and those following level 3 courses. Each of these two groups has different needs and presents different challenges. The main challenge facing the city in making provision for those currently in Education and Training is about retention rather than recruitment and whether the Post 16 element of the 14 – 19 offer in the city makes the right courses available in the right way to meet the (sometimes conflicting) needs of learners and employers.

Little hard data is available about what is happening to 17 year olds. Although the StAR suggested that there was a retention problem, this was based on national not local information. We need to know more, for example, about what proportion of the cohort change to a different course, and what proportion become NEET.

In the absence of more specific data, forecasts in this paper about future demand are based on the following assumptions:

- The current Post 16 offer at level 2 made by York College makes available a wide range of choices and is well planned. Nonetheless, there are gaps in the city wide offer and a significant number of young people are not making choices that lead to successful outcomes.
- Whilst current provision at level 3 is better suited to the needs of the great majority of students, an unacceptably large number of young people fail to complete two year courses at level 3, sometimes because they have made inappropriate choices in the first instance.

Insofar as the full range of provision for those wishing to pursue traditional academic routes is already available in the city, it follows that changes in provision for this group of young people are more likely to involve greater access to vocational or applied learning. The issue for the city is to estimate the scale of the changes that might be needed and to adjust provision accordingly.

This analysis suggests that there is likely to be an increase in demand for:

- More apprenticeships at Level 2 and at Level 3,
- The full range of specialised diplomas at level 2 and level 3.
- Better progression routes, within Post 16 provision, from level 2 to level 3.

Consultation:

Question 1:

How can we best describe the likely increase in demand for specialised or applied learning (% cohort/numbers)? What proportion of the cohort might wish to become apprentices if the provision is available? What proportion of the cohort is likely to study specialised diplomas?

Question 2:

How and where should specialised diplomas be provided post 16? What should be available locally and what should be available on a citywide basis?

Question 3:

What should be the role of 11 – 18 schools? Should they specialise in academic routes? Should they make more vocational provision themselves? Should they (and 11 – 16 schools) host more vocational provision that is made by the College as outreach provision?

Question 4:

What is the demand likely to be for the IB?

6. Next Steps.

Currently the city is in danger of conducting this debate by reference to the needs of institutions not the young people themselves and seeking to provide answers before it has properly understood the problem. A period of reflection is needed to stand back and analyse the position in the light of the Green Paper and a proper statistical analysis, based on the needs of all young people in the city.

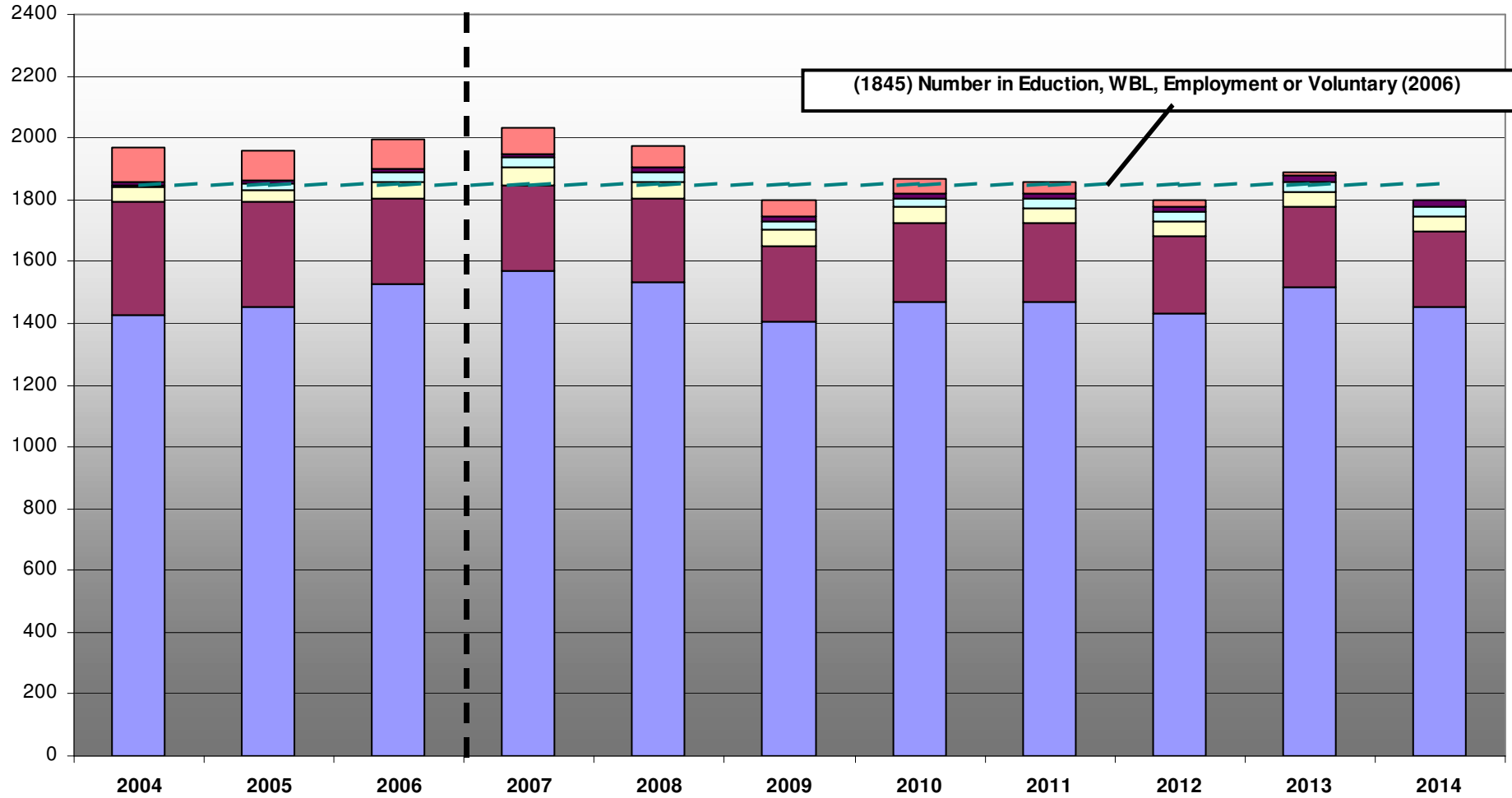
Where the questions seek to establish how many young people might choose to follow a particular route, it would be helpful if responses could estimate a % or a number. This will make it possible to model potential demand and provide the groundwork for an informed debate about the kind of provision that might be required in future.

Responses to this consultation paper are requested by Friday 25 May, to be sent to Patrick Scott at Mill House, North Street, York, YO1 6JD.

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Annex 1: Forecast of Post 16 Cohort to 2014



Annex 2.

Addressing the key issues for 14-19 learners identified in the Strategic Area Review for the City of York

Background

The LSC Strategic Area Review for the City of York (March 2005) identified the following key issues for 14-19 activities in York:

- Addressing low attainment and improving progression rates at post-16 generally and particularly in parts of the City where they are currently unacceptably low; and
- Increasing the breadth of curriculum offer available, especially vocational options at 14 and 16 for all learners, in an accessible way across the City.

Current Activity

- Very wide range of courses available to 16 year olds from pre-Entry Level to Level 3 across all sectors, except land-based and across the categories of academic, occupational and vocational (including apprentices)
- A range of opportunities for 14-16 year olds at the College (e.g. Young Apprentices, Introductory Diploma)
- Support for vocational curriculum in schools: both pre-16 e.g. support for applied GCSEs (through Increased Flexibility Partnership) and post-16 (e.g. assessment of NVQ in the workplace for learners on placements)

How can these activities be developed further?

1. Support the vocational curriculum at Danesgate Skills Centre – specific arrangements currently being finalised for September 2007 start for delivery by College.
2. Expand the range of vocational opportunities at 14 (e.g. recent success in Young Apprentice bids for Sport and Hospitality, as well as continuing Business and Engineering).
3. Develop “Stepping Stone” Foundation programme to engage potential NEETs at their original school by providing a supportive year long programme from school to further education or training. The Annex provides more detail.
4. Identify 16-18 year olds who are following courses intended for 19+. If they are in employment they could follow an apprentice or NVQ

programme (e.g. a number of young learners have been put forward for Train to Gain NVQ support which is only available to 19+; core funding can provide the same assess-train-assess model as Train to Gain). If they are taking adult evening classes, explore with them how the College can support the learner to gain full Level 2 or Level 3.

5. Develop the provision further for SLDD learners to give greater choice to meet individual needs. A bid for Pathfinder funds has been submitted to the LSC to support this development.

Stepping Stone Foundation Programme - Proposal

Proposal

To develop a Foundation Course to run 2007-08 for a small group of Year 11 leavers who the school have identified as likely to become NEET if no such provision were available. The course might also provide a safety net for those who do move on to full-time courses at College or into training with an employer and who then drop out part way through the first year.

Target Group

Learners who should achieve some E – G GCSE Grades, but who lack aspiration to move on to anything at 16.

What will the course comprise?

A full week's programme based at the school from September, but including external College and work experience opportunities from the start and moving towards summer term predominance of external activities.

The curriculum will be focused around Entry Level and Level 1 Vocational units from qualifications such as:

BTEC Introductory Diploma (e.g. Art, Sport, IT)
City & Guilds Preparation for Working Life
Open College Network

The full programme will include:

- Integration of adult literacy and numeracy
- An ICT top-up course to those already achieved by the learners
- Customer Service skills
- Challenges such as outdoor adventure
- Opportunities to develop leadership skills
- Community involvement such as volunteering
- Work placements on a regular basis

The outcomes sought are:

- Development of employability skills
- Increase in confidence
- Initiative
- Maturity
- Greater clarity about future direction

Practical arrangements

Funding

The learners would be enrolled to York College and York College will draw down LSC funding. The LSC need early involvement in understanding the development of this programme and an agreement to fund the expected activities. Registration will be through York College.

Staffing

Co-ordinated by the school, but drawing on staff from both College and school as appropriate for the activities.

Quality Assurance

Needs to meet the College Quality Assurance processes. The College will be responsible for internal verification, external verification. Agreement will be needed on the systems to be used for Observation of Teaching and Learning, learner feedback, etc.

Evaluation

Establish this as a pilot project for which resource is sought for a year long evaluation of the programme.