

Post 16 Area Based Review

19 February 2016

Local Authority Position Statement – Birmingham and Solihull

Our Ambition

Birmingham and Solihull Post 16 Area-based Review (ABR) is a once in a generation opportunity for all partners and stakeholders involved in post 16, adult education and training to drive forward the transformation of the education and skills system in our sub-region.

The newly reinvigorated education and training system in our sub-region will ignite and inspire the talent within our local communities and unleash the potential of the 14-19 and adult education and training providers to better serve our citizens, businesses and local economy as a dynamic, responsive and coherent learner-centred education and skills system.

Birmingham City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council ('The Local Authorities') fully embrace their roles as local strategic leaders to champion the needs of the local economy so all our citizens are fully able to improve the quality of life through education and skills development. We will work in partnership with all providers and stakeholders in order to secure the best possible outcomes for our citizens and the local economy.

We believe that all education providers from the earliest stages in a child's education have a key role to play in transforming people's lives and helping to provide the skills we need for future prosperity.

Our Vision

We live in a World-Class sub-region, where everyone has the opportunity to access high quality education and training, leading to sustainable employment and to lead a healthy, meaningful and prosperous life.

To achieve this:

We recognise that currently there is a gap in the skills of our citizens and those skills demanded by employers. There is a need to develop greater economic independence and personal resilience among our citizens. Therefore, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has published our Skills for Growth Strategy and in Birmingham this has been supplemented with the Skills Investment Plan, setting out specific challenges and local priorities for education and skills providers to help them to direct their funding and resources to make a greater local impact.

Furthermore, the West Midlands Combined Authority (CA) employment and skills strategy will help us target investment where it is needed to raise skills levels, tackle unemployment and have a significant impact on productivity levels.

Following the ABR, the Local Authorities, the Regional Schools Commissioner, the LEP and CA will continue to work with leaders across the education and skills system in the area to develop the best 14-19 and post 19 education and training system which meets the needs of all of our citizens.

We will work effectively with providers, school and college leaders to ensure that there is sufficient quality learning provision and progression pathways for all learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in order to secure economic prosperity.

We believe it is the right of every child to have access to good quality, independent and impartial careers information, advice and guidance.

Our Principles:

We recognise that all providers within the education and training system have independence and autonomy from local authorities. In the spirit of genuine partnership, we believe that that all partners work collaboratively underpinned by the following key principles:

1. **Moral purpose** – we are a family of education and training providers and our primary focus is on the needs of the learner
2. **Safeguarding** – we are a family of providers and we prevent any harm coming to our children, young people and vulnerable adults
3. **Working together** – no organisation in our sub-region stands alone. We all work together for the interests of our learners, to drive improvements and to innovate for prosperity
4. **Pathways for progression** – we ensure that learners achieve their potential and we proactively support learners to move on to the next level of learning, apprenticeship, employment and in-work career progression
5. **Honesty and Transparency** – we work together respectfully and are able to share difficult messages and have frank conversations that serve the interests of learners and the wider needs of the sub-region
6. **Continuous Improvement and sharing good practice** – we come together to share good practice, test new ideas, innovate and drive business improvement, supporting our peers and colleagues to improve outcomes and productivity
7. **Dynamic Quality** – we champion teaching and learning that is good or outstanding in our sub-region. We are relentless in improving outcomes for learners, the progress made by individual learners, the achievement of qualifications and the sustaining of positive destinations into education, employment or training
8. **Social inclusion and Fairness** – we work together to increase social mobility through education and skills and access to sustainable employment
9. **Raising aspirations of all groups of young people to achieve and succeed** – raising aspirations, providing additional support and a safety net to specific vulnerable groups of young people including:
 - young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
 - young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training
 - young offenders

- looked after children and care leavers

to enable them to achieve their potential.

10. **Social cohesion** – we highly value social mixing and integration within our Sub -region, so all citizens can contribute to the fabric of our area and prosper

11. **Financial sustainability and resilience** – we endorse and support the need for all post 16 providers (including schools with sixth forms) to be financially sustainable, efficient and resilient to budget changes. To manage and reduce debt and generate sufficient reserves for re-investment in the education system

Our Expectations:

We look to all education and training providers in the sub-region to adopt a system-wide approach to:

- Provide inspiration to young people and adult learners about their career options and raise their aspirations for higher education, apprenticeships and sustainable employment.
- Create a streamlined educational offer, focussed on high quality provision and coherent progression pathways into employment serving the best needs of the learner.
- Raise our game in the quality of teaching and learning across all of our diverse institutions.
- Unlock the leadership capacity within providers, recognising they are part of the fabric of the community. Enabling and equipping providers to participate in local regeneration strategies and building social capital, resilience and self-help. Unlocking leadership to drive quality improvement across the whole of the education system.
- Offer school, college and provider buildings, expertise and resources to the wider community recognising social responsibility and commitment to their neighbourhoods.
- Innovate, operate efficiently and utilise resources in order to deliver better for less. Rationalise poor quality and inefficient provision.
- Meet local skills needs and close the skills gap by supporting and constructively challenging unemployed individuals and employers in their recruitment practices.
- Increase productivity within the local economy through a skilled and adaptable local workforce. Enabling SME growth through workforce development and apprenticeships.
- Improve responsiveness, employer satisfaction and increase market penetration of local small and medium sized enterprises.
- Promote higher-level skills at Level 4 in STEM sectors through the creation of a new Institute of Technology, fully inclusive of local stakeholders in governance arrangements.
- Drive-up the volume of apprenticeship opportunities and successful local candidates with the establishment of a new Apprenticeship Organisation for the sub-region.

- Recognise the need and value of programmes of learning to widen the participation of vulnerable young people and adults. Recognise the importance of learning pathways that reduce social isolation and increase community integration, health and well-being.

The Future Landscape will look like:

- A coherent local offer focussed on progression pathways within a diverse landscape of providers including high quality school sixth forms, 14-19 academies, FE Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, Adult and Community Learning and Independent Training Providers. The local offer will consist of pathways into specific sectors including routes into higher education, apprenticeships, higher apprenticeships and employment.
- A local choice of a 'good' or 'outstanding' post 16 institutions for learners with a sustainable college network with a high quality vocational and technical offer, serving East Birmingham and Solihull, the North and South of Birmingham. With specialist engineering, hospitality and catering and creative and performing arts offer in the city centre. Proactive and integrated partnerships with local employers for progression into employment.
- Coherent academic pathways with a good range and specialist teaching of subjects through strong, viable Sixth Form Colleges, working collaboratively with their family of schools and sustainable and high quality School Sixth Forms.
- An Apprenticeship organisation offering a 'one-stop-shop' for the sub-region with employer engagement, brokerage, recruitment and marketing. With the capacity to develop an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) function.
- An offer of strategic support from Local Authorities and employers, supporting sustainable and responsive colleges, through the governance role.
- Employers more proactive in influencing, developing and co-delivering curriculum.
- Any institutions that 'requires improvement' or judged 'inadequate' should be mentored by an 'Outstanding' college or school from within or external to the local authority area.
- Every young person having at least one work-experience opportunity during the 14-19 phase of education and training.

Our Commitment

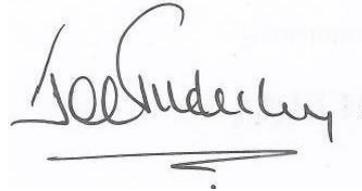
The ABR is focussed on FE and Sixth Form Colleges in the sub-region and the Local Authorities will commit:

- to offer a suitable local authority governor to all colleges to provide better alignment with local strategies.
- to support high quality, suitable, sufficient and financially viable provision, which leads to an employment pathway.

- to provide strategic challenge and support following inspection to enable all colleges to aspire to an 'outstanding' judgement from Ofsted.
- to engage in open and transparent conversations with colleges, school sixth forms and other providers around local need, quality, outcomes and infrastructure.
- through the 'Open for Learning' review taking place in Birmingham, to proactively consult and involve colleges and schools in strategic discussions around the opportunities for co-location and co-design of new services to better meet the needs of our citizens.



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