

This report may be of interest to: Members of the Education and Economy and Lifelong Learning Committees

EDUCATION BUSINESS LINKS

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report seeks endorsement of the DfEE consultation paper on developing a new structure to provide an effective delivery mechanism for education business links.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This report is about government proposals to take forward the education business link agenda in the context of local developments.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the proposals in the government consultation paper be supported.

4. **Background**

- 4.1 The DfEE published a consultation paper on 25 February 2000 on developing a new structure to provide effective delivery mechanisms for education business links.

5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 The government last year issued a consultation document "Schools and Business - Sustaining Partnership", which set out what could be done to encourage links between schools and business. A working group chaired by Peter Davies of Business in the Community, has since reported to Ministers on how to take forward this new agenda. A key recommendation of this group is that a more strategic approach at local level is required to target public resources at priority areas.
- 5.2 The Learning and Skills Bill sets out parallel government plans to reform the local management of post-16 and adult education through the establishment of new Local Learning and Skills Councils. Although primarily responsible for post-16 learning, LLSCs will ensure that effective systems are in place to support work related learning for those under 16.
- 5.3 The DfEE proposals for education/business links involve a single focus for all related partnership activity across the LLSC area. From April 2001 LLSCs will be responsible for ensuring that the following are in place:
- (a) delivery of work experience and teacher placement scheme;
 - (b) determination of strategic plans to encourage more schools and businesses to work together;
 - (c) determination of delivery priorities and ensuring these are linked to funding criteria;
 - (d) coherent planning with all key organisations, especially regional organisations, for example Business in the Community, RDAs, Government Offices; and
 - (e) assessment of performance.
- 5.4 This work will be co-ordinated with the new Connexions service and will draw on information provided to the LLSC by Local Learning Partnerships.
- 5.5 It is envisaged that education/business link organisations will deliver programmes and/or work with individual schools and business to build successful partnerships. The DfEE state that the best structure is likely to be one where there is a lead education business link consortium in each of the 47 LLSC areas.
- 5.6 From April 2001 the DfEE intend to channel funding for work experience and teacher placements through the LLSC, though no decisions on funding levels

have been made. It is expected that local school business link organisations will continue to raise funding from various sources. Future central funding will only be made available on the basis that activities provide clear outcomes supporting one or more of the national criteria, which are based around raising achievement and improving pupil motivation. Funding will also be predicated on evidence of collaborative working.

- 5.7 The government has announced £5m to ensure that the new strategy is ready to be launched from April 2001 and this will be available from May 2000 to a consortium of lead organisations in each LSC area to fund work on Initial Development Plans. The DfEE expects that the process of working together locally to produce these plans will form the basis of the closer and more strategic working relationships that will be needed to underpin this work in the future. Bids for this funding will be invited in Spring/Summer 2000. They will be assessed by Government Offices working closely with partner organisations.
- 5.8 The Education Business partnership for Milton Keynes and North Bucks is Countec. The Council would be concerned to promote a strong position for Countec and the promotion of business interest and involvement in education, as part of these developments. It is understood that the Countec Board is considering its constitution as part of seeking charitable status and the Council will be considering its response formally once the proposal is received. In the meantime the Advisory and School Support Service is being strengthened in its work with secondary age pupils and this will also assist with supporting Countec and its work during this period of national developments.
- 5.9 The DfEE proposals are broadly welcomed in so far as they give a strategic emphasis to education/business links. The Local Lifelong Learning Partnership will have an overview of the work of Countec in relation to its contribution to the Local Lifelong Learning Plan.
- 5.10 The establishment of a sub-regional approach to education/business planning will also be helpful, although this may have some practical problems associated with it given that the location of the LLSC will be in Abingdon.
- 5.11 It is therefore proposed to respond to the DFEE stating broad support for the consultation document, and to ensure that work with partners continues to protect and enhance local education/business links in Milton Keynes.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Environmental

None.

6.2 Equalities

Education/Business links form part of ensuring that all pupils are motivated to attain and to succeed in the world of work and promoting business interest and involvement in education.

6.3 Financial

None.

6.4 Legal

None.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

None.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 This report is about developments regarding education/business partnerships.

Background Papers: DfEE consultation paper on Education Business Links