



Appendix C

ABR Implementation Group

Lancashire County Council

1:30 – 3:30pm, Wednesday 4th October

DRAFT Notes

Present:

- Paul Holme, Lancashire Skills and Employment Board
- Stephen Jones, Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Dean Langton, LCA
- Dr Michele Lawty-Jones, Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub (Chair)
- Lisa Moizer, Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub
- Robin Newton-Syms, The Lancashire Colleges (TLC)
- Ajay Sethi, Lancashire County Council
- Mike Taplin, Blackpool Borough Council

Absent:

- Julia Coleman, Blackburn with Darwen Council

Agenda Item

1. Welcome and Introductions

Michele welcomed the group and thanked them for their attendance.

2. Notes of the last meeting

The notes from the last meeting were agreed.

In terms of matters arising it was reported that the Pennine Lancashire Strategic Planning Group had not yet been progressed.

3. General update / progress elsewhere in the Country and learning points

Stephen gave a high level overview of progress across the County. It was reported that 37 reviews have been completed and that 29 mergers have taken place to-date, which represents over 50% of the mergers recommended through ABR. Nationally, this has resulted in a reduction of colleges by approximately 15%; the creation of a smaller number of larger, more financially resilient institutions was a primary aim of the ABR process. Academisation is also being enacted in a number of cases.

In terms of the non-structural recommendations, there is an emphasis on local partners; these are not being monitored to the same extent as the structural recommendations by the ESFA.

At present progress is reviewed via a national group chaired by the FE Commissioner – it is anticipated that the group will operate for a limited time period. It is anticipated that the majority of the remaining structural changes (resulting from the ABR process) will be

completed during 2018/19.

It was agreed that the collaborative action plan needs to be future-proofed and positioned appropriately – taking into consideration policy change and a wider set of partners. The plan needs to go beyond the parameters of the ABR.

4. General update against the structural recommendations

Stephen provided a brief up-date against each of the structural recommendations:

Burnley College and Accrington & Rossendale College

Negotiations are continuing with the Transaction Unit. Timescales are currently unclear.

Preston's College and UCLan

The position remains as per the last meeting - the planned date for the merger of the two institutions is 1 August 2018. The recommendation is that of wholly owned subsidiary with FE designated status; an application to the agency is being submitted to trial the approach. The application is to be submitted before Christmas.

St Mary's College, Blackburn

An interim Principal has been appointed and discussions are ongoing in relation to a sustainable solution. It is anticipated that a recommendation will be made before Christmas.

5. General update against the non-structural recommendations

Members of the group were thanked for their comments on the draft plan relating to the non-structural recommendations. A number of further comments were made at the meeting. It was also agreed that the plan should be reviewed to ensure that it is not confined by the parameters of the ABR, as per the comments under item 3. A number of members committed to making changes by Monday 9th October, so that the draft plan could be shared with the Skills and Employment Board for comment.

**Mike, Robin,
Ajay**

The role of the Implementation Group is to develop the plan and seek endorsement from the Skills and Employment Board and partners. Discussion took place in relation to the monitoring of actions and it was agreed that the lead partner indicated on the plan should take responsibility for overseeing action and provide feedback to the Skills Hub on a regular basis. This could then be brought together and fed into the Skills and Employment Board. It was agreed that a recommendation to this effect would be made to board.

6. Progress in relation to Schools with Sixth Forms

Ajay confirmed that the education and economic intelligence and the skills conclusion had been shared with the RSC and the Local Education Authorities, and that all were briefed on the outcomes of the ABR process. It was indicated that relevant school planning teams would take account of the findings when making future decisions about current and planned school provision.

It was also confirmed that the education and economic intelligence and the skills conclusion had been shared with the School Sixth Form Heads' Network, and that this had resulted in positive dialogue and discussion regarding future provision. For example, spurring interest in higher level and degree apprenticeship pathways for young people.

8. Reporting to the Skills and Employment Board

The next meeting of the committee is Wednesday 18th October. The notes of the meeting will be shared with the Skills and Employment Board. The DRAFT non-structural action plan will also be shared for comment, with view to finalising the plan by the following committee meeting (29th November).

A recommendation will also be made in relation to monitoring the plan beyond the lifetime of the Implementation Group, as outlined under item 5.

9. Date of next meeting

Friday 24th November, 9:30 – 11:30am at County Hall