

North East Interim Regional Planning Group

16-19 Transfer Briefing Note

Welcome to the second North East Interim Regional Planning Group Briefing Note. This is the second in a series of briefing notes aimed at stakeholders and partners in the region with an interest in 14-19 reform, particularly the transfer of the responsibility for the commissioning of 16-19 provision from the LSC to the region's local authorities.

This briefing has gone out to a wide mailing list, however, we would be extremely grateful if you would forward it to colleagues within your networks, who can register their interest by emailing skillsnortheast@onenortheast.co.uk. Please e-mail any feedback and comments to this address.

Background

The publication of the White Paper Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver, set out Government's proposals to create a stronger and more effective system for delivering a range of entitlements for young people, and meeting the skills needs of the economy. Including the transfer of responsibility for commissioning of 16 – 19 provision from the LSC to Local Authorities, giving "*Local Authorities the necessary funding and commissioning powers to effectively deliver the new entitlements and raise the participation age.*"

A key aspect of the structures to implement this reform is the development of Sub-Regional Groups (SRGs) that reflect local travel to learn patterns. Within these groups local authorities will work together to plan the commissioning of learning in a sub-region to ensure that the needs and entitlements of learners are met and that learning reflects economic conditions and opportunities. The SRGs will then come together in a Regional Planning Group (RPG) which will provide a strategic overview of the SRG Commissioning Plans.

Further background information can be found on the [DCSF website](#).

Development of Sub regional Groups in the North East

In September 2008 the North East made submissions to DCSF setting out the intention to establish three SRGs, namely County Durham, Tees Valley, and Tyne and Wear and Northumberland. Following an assessment process these SRGs were invited to submit more detailed proposals by February 2009.

All of the SRGs submitted their Stage 2 submission to GONE by the February deadline, these were accompanied by a separate submission outlining the role and structure of the Regional Planning Group. The Stage 2 submissions build on the principles established at stage one of developing SRGs which reflect the travel to learn patterns of 16-19 year olds and build on existing partnership working. They go on to provide further details of the proposed SRG governance arrangements and operating principles. The SRG submissions will be assessed by DCSF during March and April.

Through a range of consultation events partners and stakeholders have helped the SRGs shape and develop their proposals, this will be an ongoing process and

partners will have further opportunity to engage with the development of the SRGs and the RPG during the coming months. Feedback from these events has demonstrated that there is broad support across the region for the proposed approach.

The SRGs proposals reflect local circumstances; they do however share a number of characteristics:

- The intention to work within 'model B' i.e. with all local authorities taking the lead role in commissioning provision delivered in their area
- An intention to embed 16-19 commissioning within a broad sub-regional approach to the delivery of the 14-19 agenda.
- Using sub-regional working as a means of ensuring that the learning entitlement of all young people is met in full.
- Adherence to the principle of subsidiarity, with decisions made at the most local level possible.
- A desire to ensure that the system is both transparent in engaging stakeholders and efficient in respect of decision making and transactional activity.

Copies of the SRG and the RPG submission can be found on the regional 14-19 [Commission's Portal](#). A brief summary is provided below.

Durham SRG

Durham County Council is taking the lead in the development of the Durham SRG. Durham is one of a small number of local authorities in the country which is taking forward the SRG function based around a single local authority. This proposal recognises that significant numbers of learners access provision within the county, whilst around a quarter of resident learners attend provision in either Tyne and Wear or Tees Valley.

To ensure that provision meets learner entitlement and reflects current and emerging economic opportunities, the SRG arrangements will be fully aligned with existing partnership arrangements (e.g. the county's Children's Trust and Economic Partnership) and will work closely with the Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear and Northumberland SRGs.

If you would like further information on, or have any comments to make regarding the development of the Durham SRG please contact Dave Ford of Durham County Council on david.ford@durham.gov.uk

Tees Valley SRG

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is taking the lead in the development of the Tees Valley SRG. The proposal has been developed by a Steering Group comprising representatives of each of the local authorities along with FE, Sixth Form College, Schools and Work Based Learning providers.

The SRG is being closely aligned with the Tees Valley MAA and the structures of Tees Valley Unlimited.

The SRG is underpinned by a number of key principles:

- A focus on learner needs, aspirations and outcomes as the driving force of activity.
- Subsidiarity
- Inclusive partnership working across the breadth of 14-19 provision.

The SRG is also considering options for the establishment of a shared service model to gain economies of scale and operational efficiencies.

If you would like further information on, or have any comments to make regarding the development of the Tees Valley SRG please contact Julia Morrison of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council on Julia.Morrison@stockton.gov.uk.

Tyne and Wear and Northumberland SRG

North Tyneside Council is taking the lead in the development of the Tyne and Wear and Northumberland SRG.

The SRG is being closely aligned with the Tyne and Wear MAA and in particular the City Region Employment and Skills Board. The SRG will take responsibility for delivering the 14-19 outcomes described in the MAA.

The SRG is underpinned by a number of key principles:

- Universality – ensuring that barriers to learning are removed and that all learners are able to access their entitlement.
- Subsidiarity – wherever possible decision making at the local authority level.
- Transparency and democratic accountability in decision making.

The SRG is also considering options for the establishment of a shared service model to gain economies of scale and operational efficiencies.

If you would like further information on, or have any comments to make regarding the development of the Tyne and Wear and Northumberland SRG please contact Steve Rutland of North Tyneside Council on steve.rutland@northtyneside.gov.uk .

Development of the Regional Planning Group

Guidance from DCSF has focussed upon the development of the Sub Regional Groups. We await further details in respect of the role and responsibilities of the RPG and also clarification as to whether the DCSF intends to specify the organisations it expects to see represented on the RPG.

From the information available we anticipate that the RPG will act as a forum for local authorities and other partners to ensure 16-19 commissioning plans:

- are collectively affordable within the regional funding envelope;
- are coherent, making consistent assumptions and using common data;
- will ensure delivery of the 14-19 entitlement; and
- are consistent with the priorities for economic development set out in the region's integrated regional strategy.

An interim structure is being developed which will allow us to make progress, whilst retaining the flexibility to revise structures, terms of reference and membership as further guidance is received from DCSF.

During this period, a Regional Planning Forum will provide a means of engaging stakeholders in consultation regarding the planning and coordination of 16-19 provision. Its membership will include representation from local authorities, provider representatives, employer representatives, HEI representatives, and regional strategic agencies. The Forum will be established by reconfiguring the terms of reference of the 14-19 Commission and will continue with its broad work. The RPG will provide a strong executive to support the broader regional 14-19 agenda and the work of the Regional Planning Forum. The RPG will consult with and be informed by the regional DCS Network and the Regional Planning Forum.

The RPG will work with the Regional Skills Partnership and utilise its links to Sector Skills Councils to ensure that commissioning plans reflect skills needs and integrate 16-19 commissioning with adult skills and employment policy.

These arrangements will be kept under review and we will update partners in due course.

If you would like further information on, or have any comments to make regarding the development of the Interim Regional Planning Group please contact Jeff McCloud of One North East on jeff.mccloud@onenortheast.

Frequently Asked Questions

DCSF has produced a useful FAQ document which addresses issues frequently raised by partners, it can be found on the [DCSF Website](#).