

**The Independent Review of the Mission and Purpose of Further Education in Wales in the Context of The Learning Country: Vision into Action**

**Consultation exercise to inform the above review**

**Date of Issue: January 2007**

**Action Required: Responses by 31 March 2007**

**Consultation Document**



**Post 14  
Education and  
Training**



- Title of Document:** Independent Review of the Mission and Purpose of Further Education in Wales in the Context of The Learning Country: Vision into Action.
- Audience:** The Consultation seeks the views of all parties participating and with an interest in post 14 education in Wales.
- Overview:** This document will serve to inform the independent Post 14 Education and Training Review chaired by Professor Sir Adrian Webb.
- Action required:** Responses to this consultation document must be received by 30 March 2007. Responses can be sent to the address shown below, using the freepost envelope provided, or submitted electronically to **WEBBReview@wales.gsi.gov.uk**
- Further information :** Enquiries about this consultation should be directed to Arwyn Williams on 01443 663 890
- Additional copies :** Can be obtained from:  
Tel: 01443 663 890  
Fax: 01443 663 653  
Or by visiting the Welsh Assembly Governments website **www.gov.uk/consultation**
- Address for return of comments :** Arwyn Williams  
Webb Review Secretariat  
Further Education Bill and Review Team  
Ty'r Afon  
Bedwas Road  
Bedwas  
Caerphilly  
CF83 8WT
- Freedom of Information :** All information provided to this Independent Review Panel may be incorporated into its final report, or annexes, and may be attributable to yourself (doing so can add weight to the comments expressed). In addition the Panel is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (Fol), 2000. If you have concerns with the possible release of any of the information you provide to us (including your identity) can you please let us know, and should your information be subject to a Fol request we will contact you to explore whether the information you provide can be properly withheld.

# CALL FOR EVIDENCE

## OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE: INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE MISSION AND PURPOSE OF FURTHER EDUCATION IN WALES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LEARNING COUNTRY: VISION INTO ACTION.

The Welsh Assembly Government has asked Sir Adrian Webb, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan, to lead an independent review of the mission and purpose of Further Education in Wales. Sir Adrian will be working with a small panel of experts – Sheila Drury, previously Executive Chairman of the former ELWa, and Gary Griffiths, Strategic Manager for Apprentice Programmes for Airbus UK.

The panel will draw upon a reference group consisting of key stakeholders representing a wide range of expertise. The panel, supported by the reference group, will consult and take evidence from a range of relevant stakeholders and interested parties.

The review is in line with the commitment made in *The Learning Country; Vision into Action*, which proposed the need for a thoroughgoing policy review of the mission and purpose of further education in Wales. It identified the need to give consideration to the extent to which colleges should specialise; the diverse nature of the sector; the focus on employability skills and the need for increased responsiveness to learners. In her statement to the Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee on 22 November 2006, Jane Davidson AM, Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, said:

*“The review will be holistic and incorporate an analysis not just of Further Education Institutions, but an evaluation of the wider role of the sector in relation to post sixteen developments, 14-19 Learning Pathways, higher education, workplace learning, and the Leitch review.”*

*“As identified in Vision Into Action, the review will consider the extent to which FE institutions should focus on economically useful skills; the extent to which they should specialise; efforts to improve quality; the place of self regulation and other measures to streamline governance; the diverse nature of the sector; workforce development initiatives; and how best to monitor the views of students on a regular basis and to publish the results.”*

It is clear that the review is to take a broad “whole system” view of future needs and systems rather than a narrowly institutional or sectoral view. It therefore includes consideration of all elements of provision within post-14 lifelong learning, including the interfaces between colleges, schools, community and voluntary sector, adult learning, employees, private training providers, and higher education.

The Review is to report by autumn 2007. Its terms of reference are attached.

For further details please contact:  
WEBBReview@wales.gsi.gov.uk

## **Scope**

The scope of the Review includes all further education and will specifically focus on:

- the functions currently exercised by publicly funded bodies in respect of further education and training;
- the efficacy and cost effectiveness of these functions;
- what functions and priorities should be exercised in the future and the priority placed on them;
- the mechanisms for how these functions should be discharged; and
- the development of the workforce.

## **Process**

The Review Panel is discussing these issues in detail with key representatives of those who plan, fund, deliver, inspect and undertake further education. The Panel is supported by an External Reference Group. It is also keen to receive written views from key stakeholders and may wish to explore some contributions in meetings.

## **What are we asking from you?**

To help inform the Review, we invite you to address the key question of:

**What improvements, in the context of high ambitions but a finite budget, would best ensure provision of fit for purpose, high quality education, learning and training post 14?**

In constructing your response to this question, the Review Panel are particularly interested in gauging your views as to how we can meet the **future** learning needs of individuals, society and the economy in Wales, as well as identifying current strengths and weakness within the sector.

In your response you may wish to consider such issues as:

- the future knowledge and skills needs of learners;
- the future knowledge and skills needs of the economy and society;
- provider responsiveness (current and future) to employer, social, economic and learner need;

- the extent to which provision is, and is readily understood by potential users as, a coherent system of choices and opportunities;
- the best use of scarce resources;
- improved effectiveness of collaborative working between providers;
- the contribution of advanced technologies such as e-learning;
- the workforce needs of providers and the competencies and skills needed by practitioners;
- the adequacy and appropriateness of present and future governance arrangements;
- the development of bilingualism and promotion of equality and diversity; and
- the two/three most important issues that need to be tackled to deliver the learning and skills needed in the future.

*Due to the wide range of issues to be covered by the Review and the timescale prescribed, responses will have most impact if kept within a limit of around 2,000 words.*

Please send comments by **31 March 2007** to:

Webb Review Secretariat  
 Further Education Bill and Review Team  
 Welsh Assembly Government  
 Ty'r Afon  
 Bedwas  
 Caerphilly  
 CF83 8WT

Or email: **WEBBReview@wales.gsi.gov.uk**.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss any aspects of the above please contact Julie Matthews or Arwyn Williams on 01443 663 890 or at the email address above.

# **Terms of Reference for the Review of Further Education Sector in Wales**

## **Review Title:**

**The Independent Review of the Mission and Purpose of Further Education in Wales in the context of The Learning Country: Vision into Action.**

## **Context and rationale:**

In line with the commitment made in the '*The Learning Country-Vision into Action*', the Welsh Assembly Government is establishing an independent review to evaluate the strategic mission and role of the Further Education sector in the delivery of education, lifelong learning and skills in Wales.

*The Learning Country-Vision into Action* proposed the need for a thoroughgoing policy review of the mission, and purpose of the sector in Wales. It identified the need to give consideration to the extent which colleges should specialise, the diverse nature of the sector, the focus on employability skills and the need for increased responsiveness to learners.

The review will be holistic and incorporate an analysis not just of Further Education Institutions, but an evaluation of the wider role of the sector in relation to developments in 14-19 education and training, higher education, the Leitch Review on skills, workplace and adult learning.

## **Remit:**

Within this context the review will consider the extent to which the mission and business objectives of further education providers is clear in purpose, focused and appropriate for the environment in which they operate. Specifically the review will focus on the following:

- the functions currently exercised by publicly funded bodies in respect of further education and training;
- the efficacy and cost effectiveness of these functions;
- what functions and priorities should be exercised in the future and the priority placed on them;
- the mechanisms for how these functions should be discharged; and
- the development of the workforce.

In considering these areas the following will need to be investigated:

- comparative European and international analysis, particularly relating to strategies surrounding the delivery of skills;
- the funding methodology for establishing effective collaboration in education and training;
- the present and future role of the sector in the delivery of economic skills and workforce development, including opportunities for specialisation at national and regional level and the role of the Sector Skills Councils;
- the training and professional development of the workforce, including the case for setting up a workforce professional body;
- the present and future contribution of the sector to tackling disadvantage, economic inactivity and widening participation including adult and community learning;
- the role of the sector in delivery of higher education, including the establishment of schools/further and higher education consortia;
- methods of ensuring that the experience and views of learners in the sector contribute to the assessment of quality and continued improvement;
- the support mechanisms for ensuring learner support and progression for looked after learners;
- governance, self regulation and management of FEIs;
- strategies for ensuring managerial and teaching competencies are relevant to need;
- the role and function of careers support, advice and guidance within the sector; and
- the role and contribution of the sector to the development and delivery of Welsh medium and bilingual learning opportunities and Welsh language skills.

The Review will need to be mindful of the key principles of equality of opportunity; support for the Assembly's policies on race equality, disability and promoting bilingualism; sustainable development; and social justice.