



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Cabinet

19th February 2007

AGENDA NOTE – ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Report of the Corporate Director Adults and Housing

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The Adult Skills and Learning Service is dependent on Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funding. Our ESOL provision generates a substantial part of our income from LSC. Over 1,500 people enrol on ESOL courses with the City. ESOL learners are a substantial cohort of our learners across the city. ESOL classes have always been offered free of charge and take-up has been sharp, with demand often outstripping supply.

1.2 In its annual statement of priorities, *Raising our Game*, published in October 2006, the LSC says:

“From 2007/2008, ESOL learning will no longer attract automatic fee remission. Free tuition will be available only to priority groups – primarily people who are unemployed or receiving income-based benefits”.

1.3 These proposed changes mean that:

- Existing universal entitlement to free ESOL training up to level 2 is removed
- Fee remission is available only to people receiving means-tested benefits and tax credits
- Asylum seekers aged 19+ will no longer be automatically eligible for publicly funded FE provision from 2007/08.

1.4 The exact changes to funding have not yet been agreed and various groups, including the City Council are campaigning in an effort to change LSC' direction. A final decision is awaited.

1.5 The Cabinet Lead has written letters to:

- Bill Rammell MP, Minister of State for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning
- Phil Hope MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, both at the Department for Education and Science.
- Verity Bulloough, Regional Director, EMLSC,
- Mark Hayson National Director LSC
- John Kirkland O.B.E., Chair of EMLSC.
- 3 City M.P.s.

1.6 Additional work being undertaken by officers at this time includes:

- collecting and presenting evidence to relevant bodies as to how people living in Leicester may be affected by such changes
- working closely with LSC in drawing up a schedule as to how to implement any changes
- assessing the level of fee so as to cause minimum disruption
- identifying any other possible sources of funding
- working closely with learners around the introduction of any large-scale changes
- reviewing our programme offer to meet needs of learners and offer “best value”