



meeting **SKILLS: NOW AND THE FUTURE SELECT COMMITTEE**

date **12 MAY 2008**

agenda item number

## **Report of the Chair of the Skills: Now and the Future Select Committee**

### **Work Programme**

#### **Purpose of the report**

1. To indicate the further work programme for this Select Committee.

#### **Background**

2. On 28 January 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Select Committee to examine workforce skills issues in Nottinghamshire. On 17 March the Skills: Now and the Future Select Committee received a scene-setting presentations on skills issues. On 17 March the government announced substantial changes to the delivery of skills for adults and young people. This comprises the dissolution by 2010 of the Learning and Skills Council and the transfer of responsibility for commissioning courses and training to local authorities in the case of young people and to a new Skills Funding Agency in the case of adults.
3. At its meeting on 14 April 2008, the select committee received evidence from the Learning and Skills Council, Job Centre Plus, the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses.
4. On 12 May 2008, the select committee planned to take evidence from major companies in order to gain their perspective on skills and skills gap issues as well as innovative approaches to training. The Select Committee invited Rolls-Royce, Boots, McDonalds and John Lewis. Unfortunately, only Boots and John Lewis were able to undertake to attend on the given date.

#### **Further Information**

5. Following merger with Alliance Unichem in 2006, The Boots Group PLC became known as Alliance Boots. Boots is the main pharmacy chain in the United Kingdom. Founded in 1849, by the First World War

there were 500 Boots shops. Boots now has approximately 3000 outlets in nine countries. Boots diversified into pharmaceutical manufacturing and developed ibuprofen. Additionally, in 2005 Boots sold its over-the-counter medicines business to Anglo-Dutch company Reckitt Benckiser for £1.936 billion.

6. In March of this year Alliance Boots undertook to support a new international pharmacy degree course to be taught at the University of Tor Vergata in Rome (but also involving the co-operation of the University of Nottingham).
7. Boots will be represented by Melanie McCall, Head of Resourcing, Non-Stores.
8. The John Lewis Partnership has its origins in Oxford Street, London in 1870 where John Lewis opened a haberdashery which diversified into linens before expanding to become a major department store and ultimately department store chain. In 1929, Spedan Lewis (one of John Lewis' sons) established a profit-sharing trust for the benefit of the employees of the stores thus creating the John Lewis Partnership.
9. The John Lewis store in Nottingham recently picked up three awards at the Heart 106 Lifestyle Awards: Fashion Retailer of the Year, Beauty Product Retailer of the Year and Interior Retailer of the Year.
10. The John Lewis Partnership recognises that high-calibre managers are key to maintaining its position as one of the UK's leading retailers. The Partnership operates a wide range of training schemes including a Management Development Programme and a Finance Graduates Scheme.
11. The John Lewis Partnership will be represented by Sue Workman, Personnel Manager at the Nottingham branch.

### **Work Programme**

12. Further to the announcement of the dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council and the planned transfer of part of its function to Local Authorities, the Select Committee may wish to consider whether or not to commission briefing from Children and Young People's Services on the likely response within this Authority to the proposals. In the light of such briefing the Select Committee may wish to consider whether it needs to refresh its scoping document to take account of these new proposals.
13. The scoping document for this review indicates that the Select Committee will seek to take evidence from the Greater Nottingham Employment and Skills Board (GNE&SB) and also consider the extent to which Further Education (FE) courses can be tailored to meet the needs of new employers.

14. The last evidence gathering meeting of this Select Committee is set for Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June at 2:00 pm. Reflecting upon the contributions from partner organisations so far, it is now considered inappropriate to invite representation from the GNS&B but the Select Committee may wish to consider inviting representatives of FE colleges. Other options include inviting representation from the Making the Connection projects impacting on the County.
15. The final meeting of the Select Committee will be on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July at 2:00 pm when the committee will consider and agree its final report.

### **Recommendation**

16. It is recommended that

the Skills: Now and the Future Committee consider and agree the work programme, receive evidence, and initiate lines of questioning as necessary.

**Councillor John Knight**

**Chair of the Skills: Now and the Future Select Committee**

Background papers: nil.