



The information authority

Paper 10: *The information authority secretariat report*

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Date: 19th September 2008

1 What are we asking the board to do?

This paper gives a status update on the work of *the information authority* secretariat. Decisions are required on three items; the remainder of the paper is for information.

2 Introduction

This status report covers work by the secretariat since the board meeting on 4th June 2008 and that planned before the next meeting on 3rd December 2008.

3 Decisions to be taken / items to be noted by the Board

The following decisions are required:

3.1 Staffing resource

Since *the information authority* became operational in October 2007, it has become clear that additional resource is required to meet the ministerial remit and demand from the FE system. Particular areas of pressure are:

- the provision of data standards expertise for data collection, transformation and reporting. This will be critical to support the FE Data Service.
- support for improving data quality within the sector
- consultation and communication with the FE system especially facilitation of the online community forum. (Consultation improves decision making but is significantly more time consuming than a central government directed process)
- driving through improvements following the Data Burden report

A further six posts are recommended (three of which were agreed by the board in March 2008). The costs of these posts can be met from the budget agreed by DIUS for *the information authority* for the period 2008 – 2011.

It is proposed that resource demands should be reviewed further in mid 2009 when the demands of a fully functioning Data Service and the post- Machinery of Government implications are clearer. A revised staffing business case is expected to be submitted at that time.

A summary of the business case is at Appendix A. Further detail is available from the secretariat. The business case is also being submitted to the LSC's Director of Finance and Resources and to DIUS for agreement.

The board is asked to approve the addition of these six posts to the secretariat structure (having confirmed three of these in March 2008). No additional funding is being requested.

3.2 Performance of *the information authority*

Annual performance criteria for *the information authority* were agreed by the board in March 2008. The secretariat had committed to review performance against the criteria twice yearly. The criteria and the secretariat's assessment of performance are detailed at Appendix B.

The board is asked to confirm that it is content with performance against the criteria, and to provide further feedback / guidance as appropriate.

3.3 Workplan of *the information authority*

The updated workplan for the secretariat for the coming 12 months is attached at Appendix C. This will support the budget submission for 2009/10 which will be in line with the previous three year forecast.

The board is asked to confirm that it is content with the workplan.

Points for noting by the board:

3.4 Annual report

The information authority has produced its first annual report which has been sent to board members. This report will be sent to ministers and key stakeholders within the FE system as part of the authority's accountability to these groups. It will be made available on the authority's website and sent to selected media.

The secretariat would be grateful for any feedback or comment on the report from board members.

3.5 Annual perception survey

A survey was sent out to stakeholders asking questions about their awareness of *the information authority* and its work. We received 134 responses in total, mainly from government departments or agencies, HE providers and Local Authorities. Encouragingly, 58% of respondents were aware of *the information authority* before completing the survey and 62% of the respondents had some awareness of the work we do.

However, 64% of respondents did not realise that we were responsible for agreeing the changes to the ILR for the last two years; and most respondents felt that they could not say how effective we had been in improving the setting and regulation of data standards. The results of this survey will be used as a benchmark, so that we can assess the effectiveness of a range of awareness-raising activity, such as the media campaign being planned to publicise our annual report.

3.6 Machinery of Government changes

The secretariat has continued discussions with DIUS and stakeholders such as the LSC about the future position of *the information authority*, including hosting of the secretariat, post Machinery of Government changes. The secretariat has received oral assurances that the independence of the authority will be preserved in the future set up.

The secretariat will advise the board once decisions have been made.

3.7 Follow up to the Data Burden report

The LSC's response to the Data Burden report is a separate submission at this meeting.

In October 2008 the authority is commencing a three month piece of work in conjunction with the LSC on options for reducing / eliminating paper learner records. This will include lessons from the National Employer Service pilot on electronic records. The £50k cost of this initial work is being borne by *the information authority*.

The secretariat has been working with numbers of stakeholders to investigate further the causes and possible solutions to inconsistent requirements from awarding bodies for award entry and results notification. The secretariat is grateful for the support of all those who have contributed so far.

It is proving difficult to identify clearly the most effective way forward given the numbers of initiatives in the awarding arena e.g. 14 – 19 Diplomas, the introduction of the MIAP Learner Record, the proposals for implementation of the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The secretariat will be producing a paper for Ofqual and DCSF/ DIUS outlining the overall picture, identifying gaps which will continue to drive data burden, and making recommendations for further work. This will be produced with the support of stakeholders such as the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB), the National Assessment Agency, MIAP, LSC etc.

FAB will be making its formal response to the Data Burden report at the board meeting in December.

4 Further information

The appendices to this report include:

- Staffing business case (Appendix A)
- Progress against performance criteria for the authority (Appendix B)
- Workplan for the next 12 months (Appendix C)
- Progress report for the period June to September 2008 (Appendix D)
- Financial performance for 2008/09 (Appendix E)
- Risks and issues (Appendix F)

5 Contact Details

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Appendix A

Business Case: Development of the *information authority* secretariat

18 SEPTEMBER 2008

Purpose

1. This paper outlines the changing demand and increasing expectations of *the information authority*, the consequences for staffing in 2008/09 and the expected resource demand to 2010.
2. Endorsement is sought from the LSC's National Director of Finance and Resources, DIUS and *the information authority* board for:
 - their agreement to the staffing increase being proposed to April 2009. This consists of six posts; three of which have already been agreed by *the information authority* board. **No additional budget is requested.** (Separate cases will be developed for detailed changes to roles and responsibilities.)
 - the direction of the proposed change to 2010. A future submission will ask for agreement to further phases as the demands become clearer.
3. The LSC's National Director of Finance and Resources, DIUS and *the information authority* board are also asked to confirm that they agree with the extent of demand on *the information authority* as described below.

Increases in demand on *the information authority*

4. When *the information authority* secretariat structure was agreed in June 2007, it was based on the terms of reference at that time which emphasised a focus on improvements to the learner data collection, and the expected demand from the sector.
5. The secretariat has been operating for just under 12 months and the resource demands are much clearer:
 - The terms of reference for *the information authority* were changed by the board in December 2007 to make it clear that the authority would take an interest in a wide range of data within the FE system. For example, this includes standards work for workforce data, and consideration of initiatives such as Framework for Excellence.
 - Once *the information authority* started consulting with data providers and users, it became apparent that there was significant pent-up demand for improvements to data standards and processes. This includes transparent change processes, a revised ILR timetable to introduce more notice of changes, frustrations with inconsistent standards around learner evidence.
 - Opening up the ILR process to consultation across the FE system is enabling improved decision making by the board. This consultation is, however, necessarily more time consuming than the previous centre-led process. Demand is expected to increase in future years as more stakeholders become aware of the process and consultation is extended to a wider range of data collections and reports
 - *The information authority* board had asked the secretariat to establish the drivers of provider data burden and in line with its remit take action to minimise information

bureaucracy. The Data Burden study published in June 2008 has generated a number of strands of work e.g. tackling inconsistent data requirements from awarding bodies and ad hoc data requests from the LSC.

- The set up of the Data Service has crystallised demands for clear requirements for data collection, transformation and reporting. Consultation and the facilitation of agreement on requirements is part of *the information authority's* remit, and this demand is expected to grow significantly as the Data Service becomes established.
- Machinery of Government (MoG) changes will increase the complexity of data demands from the FE system e.g. with an increasing number of stakeholders (local authorities, the YPLA and the SFA). *The information authority* is also expected to take on some data related responsibilities which are currently the responsibility of the LSC e.g. information policy.

Responsibilities between *the information authority* and the Data Service

6. *The information authority* and the Data Service have been working together to clarify responsibilities between the two organisations (and interactions with the LSC). The high level division of responsibilities is shown at Table 1 below. (A more detailed division of responsibilities is available).

Table 1 High level responsibilities between *the information authority*, the Data Service and the LSC

LSC	<i>The information authority</i>	The Data Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of FE policy • Implementation of FE services • Originator of data requirements (particularly funding) • Consumer of MI / reports • Agreement of LSC / DS service contract • Development of data sharing protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of data improvements for the wider FE system • Aggregation of data requirements • Consultation & agreement on requirements • Specification of data standards e.g. quality, frequency • Communication of requirements / changes • Agreement of multi-party service contracts with DS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of data systems and processes • Agreement & management of service contracts • Changes to data systems & processes • Provision of helpdesk • Operation of data collection, analysis and reporting • Production of data publications e.g. SFR • Application of data sharing protocol • Improvements to DS systems and processes

7. This division of responsibilities between *the information authority* and the Data Service is based on the individual remits of the two organisations. It recognises that *the information authority* is responsible for standards, data requirements (including improvements to quality) and leading consultation with the FE system. The Data Service is responsible for managing and implementing data systems and processes, and data production (aggregation and transformation of data, and the production of reports / MI).

8. The work on respective responsibilities has informed the development of *the information authority* organisation structure.

Staffing requirements and budget implications

9. The current structure of the authority plus contract resource has capacity to manage the ILR specification cycle and provide some limited support for other data collections. If *the information authority* is to meet the current demand and remit, the additional headcount described in the attached business case is required (6 posts). Three of these posts have already been agreed by *the information authority* board.
10. The costs of the additional staff are detailed below in Table 2. Three of the posts had already been budgeted for within the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period. *The information authority* budget had been constructed on the basis that with a smaller headcount more work would need to be completed by contract resource. It is proposed to absorb the costs of the additional three posts within the original budget, and therefore no additional budget is being requested.
11. All the indications are that more resource will be required to meet the demands from a fully functioning Data Service and post - MoG changes. Given the uncertainty about this requirement, this is not being requested at this time. Further increases in headcount would be phased in line with demand. It is estimated that the total headcount would increase by a maximum of 8 further posts by April 2010.
12. With this maximum complement of staff, it is assumed that most project work would be completed within the secretariat. Therefore the additional staff costs would primarily be met by reducing the existing project budget. In 2010/11, revenue costs would increase by a maximum of £250,000 above the original forecast to £1.5m, while capital costs would remain flat.
13. The funding for *the information authority* is primarily provided by DIUS with a small amount coming from the LSC in relation to transferred staff. For 2008/09, the amount of revenue funding from the LSC was £108k with £1,074k coming from DIUS. DIUS has confirmed funding for *the information authority* for the CSR period. There is no expectation of any change in funding arrangements.

Table 2 Additional staffing costs

IA Secretariat organisation	FTE	Salary Costs (91% of max salary)	Full Cost *	Add FTE	Additional Salary Cost	Add Full Cost
Current (July 08)	8.4	£319,448	£468,354			
Phase 1: Sept 08 - April 09	14.4	£527,101	£772,544	6	£207,653	£304,191

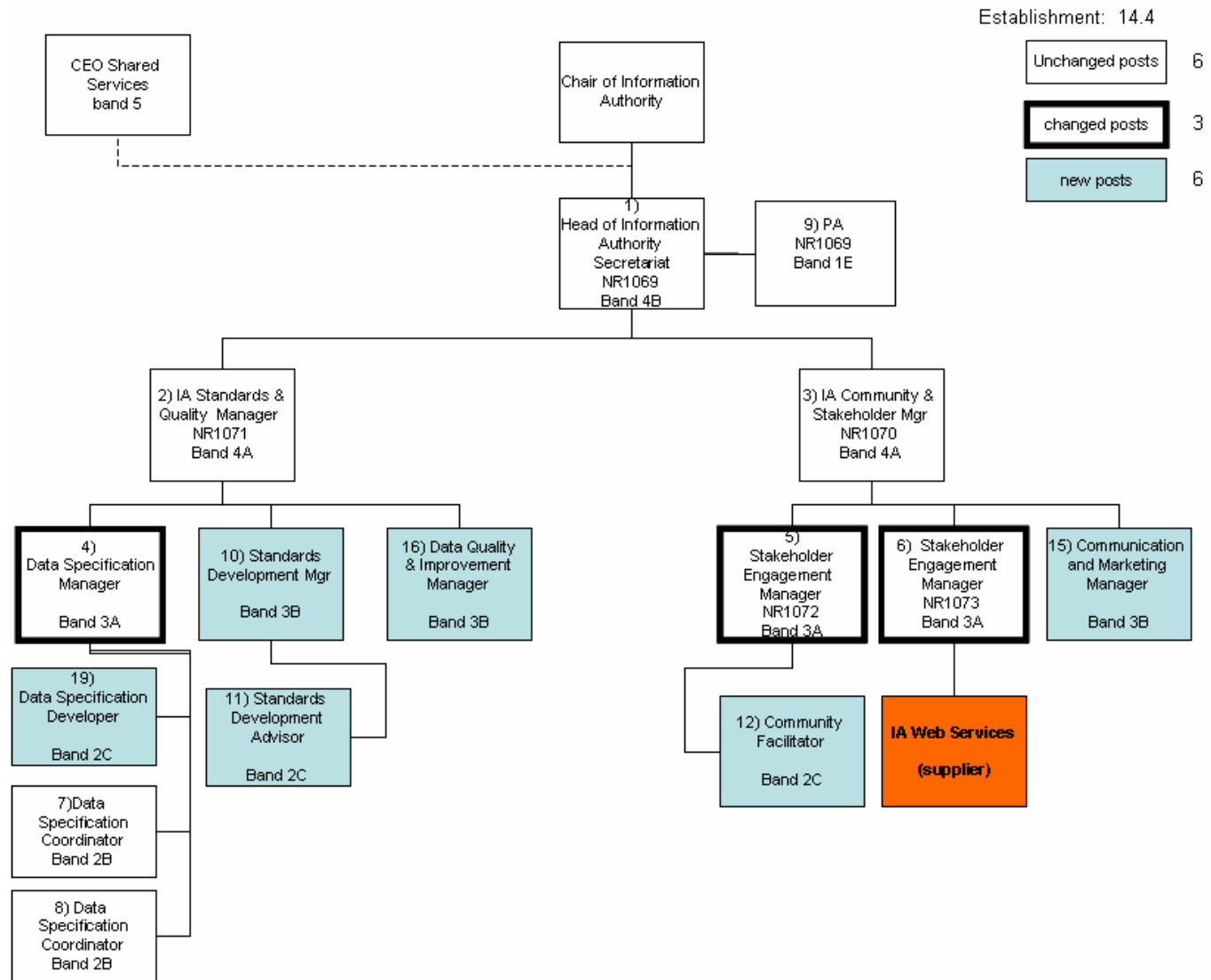
*Full costs include salary, pension, NI, benefits, training and allowance for accommodation and IT costs

Conclusion and recommendation

14. Since *the information authority* became operational in October 2007, it has become clear that additional resource is required to meet the ministerial remit and demand from the FE system. A further six posts are recommended (three of which have already been agreed by *the information authority* board). The costs of these posts can be met from the budget agreed by DIUS for the period 2008 – 2011.

15. It is proposed that resource demands should be further reviewed in mid 2009 when the FE landscape becomes clearer. A revised staffing business case is expected to be submitted at that time.

16. Proposed organisation structure of the information authority secretariat at April 2009



Appendix B

1. The *information authority* – detailed performance criteria

The performance criteria for *the information authority* (covering both the board and the secretariat) are described below. Performance against the criteria will be reviewed twice a year (in March and September) by the board, and the criteria will be reviewed annually. These criteria were agreed by the board in March 2008.

2. Criteria and performance

2.1 Develop a transparent process for data changes

The information authority secretariat will:

- Publish a clear and transparent process for data changes
- Specify unambiguous assessment criteria for changes
- Support stakeholders in the development of business cases for changes
- Provide a variety of mechanisms for debating and challenging proposed changes. (These will include face to face groups and online communities)
- Present balanced recommendations on proposed changes to *the information authority* board.

The information authority board will:

- Take transparent decisions on change requests based on balancing provider burden versus the provision of useful information for providers and data users

Measures and performance:

- The publication of an agreed data change process, ILR change timetable for 2009/10, and change assessment criteria by 31st March 2008. **Complete**
- Publication of board papers showing how decisions were reached. **Complete / ongoing**
- The delivery of ongoing improvements in processes as agreed with stakeholders. **Ongoing e.g. ILR change process, work commencing on learner documentation**
- Feedback from stakeholders on support and communication mechanisms. **Assessment to be undertaken in autumn 2008 on effectiveness of ILR change process for 2009/10.**

2.2 Agree clear standards for FE data with alignment between schools and HE

The information authority will:

- Set and communicate clear standards for FE data ensuring these are available to all interested parties
- Adopt any common data standards wherever possible
- Resolve any potential conflicts with HE and / or schools. In the first instance resolution will be through the appropriate body (HESA or the Schools Star Chamber), or if necessary via the Information Standards Board (ISB)
- Participate fully with the ISB, as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the two bodies

Measures and performance:

- Publication of data standards on *the information authority* website with links to other standards where appropriate. **ILR standards published; more work to be done on linking to other standards.**

- Adoption of agreed data standards by the Data Service, and increasing uptake by other users in the FE system **In progress following establishment of the FE Data Service in June '08.**
- Feedback from stakeholder groups including the ISB, HESA and the Schools Star Chamber on collaborative working enabling the adoption of common standards, and on the clarity / usefulness of standards. **Good working relationships in place with these groups.**

2.3 Develop effective and wide engagement with stakeholder groups

The information authority will:

- Establish wide and deep networks across the FE system
- Provide a variety of mechanisms for engaging with stakeholder groups e.g. for consultation or promulgation of standards
- Ensure that the views of all stakeholder groups are considered in developing its work
- Develop an effective mechanism for tracking issues and incorporating them into *the information authority* workplan

Measures and performance:

- Development and implementation of a comprehensive stakeholder and communication plan. **Plan in place and being implemented; perception survey indicates more to do in profile raising.**
- Provision of face to face groups, teleconferences, and a user-friendly community website for stakeholder engagement. All to be in place by March 2008. **Complete and ongoing.**
- The set up of a clear, easy to navigate website which provides easy access to documents, information and help to be in place by March 2008. **Complete with improvements underway.**
- In conjunction with the Data Service, provision of a responsive Customer Relationship Management function. **In development with the Data Service.**
- Feedback from stakeholders as to effectiveness of engagement. **Generally good feedback received when interactions have occurred; the issue is with reaching a wide enough audience.**

2.4 Eliminate data duplication

The information authority will:

- Undertake a complete review of data captured in the ILR to reduce data duplication
- Consider for all new change requests whether data is already captured or can be combined with an existing collection
- Challenge any proposals where data is to be collected which is already captured elsewhere
- Encourage the review of existing data collections to remove data duplication
- Rationalise data algorithms and reporting so that discrepancies in interpretation are eliminated

Measures and performance:

- Review the key aspects of the ILR for 2009/10 to eliminate data duplication; with remainder to follow. **Complete for 2009/10; further work to continue.**
- Development and application of an appropriate assessment criterion (to prevent data duplication) for any proposed change request, to be in place by 31st March 2008. **Complete; assessment of effectiveness to be undertaken.**

- Deliver an agreed approach for harmonising success rate reporting by LSC / Ofsted by June 2008. **FE success rates are now aligned; work ongoing to resolve issues with employer responsive provision.**
- Identification of data collections / reporting mechanisms within the FE system and the provision of support for their review to remove data duplication or discrepancies. **Ongoing; significant support provided to LLUK on staff data collection.**
- The establishment of standards to be adopted by the Data Service to eliminate data duplication and discrepancies in algorithms / reporting. **To be developed.**

2.5 Focus on data for key FE performance metrics

The information authority will:

- Work with government departments / agencies and the FE sector to identify key performance areas
- Set standards for key FE performance metrics within priority areas
- Evaluate the standards being proposed for new / improved performance measurement mechanisms to ensure consistency, clarity and the minimising of data burden

Measures and performance:

- Adoption of priority areas for *information authority* work: 1) learner data, 2) awarding data, 3) staff data. **Complete and ongoing**
- The specification of standards for key collections /reports within the priority areas, commencing with the ILR. **In progress for key part of ILR specification for 2009/10; ongoing.**
- Development and implementation of clear data standards for performance management tools such as Framework for Excellence and Minimum Levels of Performance. **To be undertaken.**

2.6 Reduced set of standard reports

The information authority will:

- Specify a standard set of reports for key FE data
- Define data access rules for FE data (including Data Protection issues)

Measures and performance:

- Evaluate through the Data Service which reports are currently produced, and propose a rationalisation of these reports; initial phase by October 2008. **Not yet started due to lack of resource.**
- Develop and publish clear, data access rules for the Data Service covering all agencies / departments / providers for April 2008 operation by June 2008. **Determined that this is the responsibility of the data owners e.g. LSC.**
- Establishment of a Data Protection champion within *the information authority* by May 2008. **Training yet to be undertaken.**

2.7 Perceived to act with integrity and add real value

The information authority will:

- Act to reduce bureaucracy wherever possible, balancing the data need vs. burden
- Establish clear and transparent assessment criteria for all change requests
- Communicate clearly how decisions have been taken
- Take decisions in the interests of the FE system as a whole including learners (and wherever possible act for the benefit of the wider education system)
- Deliver 'value for money'

Measures and performance:

- Feedback from stakeholders on reduction of burden and quality of decisions. **Initial feedback positive; more to be done.**
- Rationale for decisions to be published on *the information authority* website **Complete and ongoing.**
- Measurement of reduction in burden following initial benchmarking exercise (to be completed by May 2008). **Initial measurement taken; to be reviewed bi-annually.**

3. Next steps

The board is asked to provide further feedback and guidance on performance to date, and whether any adjustments should be made to the performance criteria. The next formal review of the criteria is due in March 2009.

Appendix C

The information authority – plans

1 Background

The information authority is responsible for setting data standards for post- 16 learning across the FE system in England. Its objectives are to:

- Improve the quality and use of information in support of effective decision making by all stakeholders in the sector
- Significantly reduce bureaucracy across the FE system to release time, resources and energy for front line services
- Improve accountability to learners, learning providers and data users for data standards, collections and reporting

2 Workplan

The current workplan for the information authority can be summarised as follows:

2.1 Address data burden

- Following the study into provider data burden by Oakleigh Consulting published in June 2008, work with organisations to address the issues raised. Specifically:
 - Scrutinise a formal response by the LSC to the board meeting in October 2008
 - By October 2008, agree a plan with the LSC to reduce ad hoc data demands including how this could be implemented in its successor organisations
 - In conjunction with the LSC, complete by January 2009 an investigation into reducing / eliminating paper records related to learner records and ILR documentation
 - Discuss specific issues providers currently have with audit requirements and assess where inconsistencies could be minimised. (Case studies being produced)
 - Scrutinise a formal response by the Federation of Awarding Bodies to variations in awarding body specification and data formats at the board meeting in December 2008
 - Work with the awarding bodies and other interested stakeholders to assess opportunities for improvement in data standards and data transfers between awarding bodies and providers
 - By March 2009, agree governance arrangements for collections by Connexions offices

2.2 Set data standards

- Publish data standards for key sections of the ILR in the specification for 2009/10
- Review data standards for the remaining sections of the ILR for 2010/11
- Review data definitions, algorithms and align collection / reporting dates
 - Data definitions for key sections of the ILR to be reviewed for 2009/10 specification.
 - Consultation on ILR collection / reporting dates to be undertaken in autumn 2008 for implementation in 2009/10
- Align FE, schools and HE data definitions and standards through ongoing dialogue and collaboration including through the Information Standards Board

- Harmonise LSC / Ofsted success rate reporting. Specifically:
 - Agree appropriate governance for the definition and production of success rates by December 2008
 - Identify options for resolving remaining discrepancies in success rates by December 2008
- Review and agree proposed FE system collections, specifically:
 - National Apprenticeships Vacancy Matching Service (October 2008)
 - Integrated Employment and Skills (October 2008)
 - LLUK's Staff Individualised Record 2009/10 (December 2008)
 - Framework for Excellence – Phase 2 (March 2009)
- Support the development of key sector initiatives e.g.
 - Qualifications and Credit Framework
 - Skills Accounts

2.3 Data collection and analysis

- Reference material to be included in data collection specifications detailing how data is used. This will be completed for key sections of the ILR for 2009/10 specification. Remaining sections to be completed for 2010/11 specification.
- A transparent process & procedures for changes has been implemented. This will be reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis.
- Removal of data duplication (priority data). Six fields were proposed for removal in 2009/10 ILR specification; and a further exercise is to be completed for 2010/11
- The specification timetable for the ILR has been brought forward for 2009/10 to provide more stability in the system. Consultation will be undertaken to inform the timetable for 2010/11
- Ongoing management of the ILR specification annual cycle.

2.4 Data reporting

- Work to be undertaken with the Data Service and DIUS to assess key areas for improvement in reporting e.g. Statistical First Releases
- Findings from the David Mason study on 'Top Down Reporting' to be assessed once available, and further work to be planned
- In conjunction with the LSC and the Data Service, data quality issues to be assessed and prioritised for improvement
- Continue work with the LSC, Data Service, HESA and HEFCE to improve the reporting of FE data in HE and vice versa

2.5 Data Service support

- Provide requirements, data standards etc. to the Data Service for data collection, analysis and reporting
- Participate in Data Service governance arrangements – providing direction, support and scrutiny as required
- Undertake joint projects with the Data Service to drive improvements in FE data collection, transformation and reporting

2.6 Communication and engagement

- Stakeholder engagement to identify required improvements in data collection / reporting etc, and consult on proposed changes. This is an ongoing process and includes stakeholders throughout the FE system as well as those in HE and schools as appropriate
- Review of stakeholder engagement including board membership to reflect Machinery of Government changes and closer alignment of employment and skills agenda.
 - Specifically to determine how best to engage with local authorities ensuring effective governance of data requirements

- Undertake annual perception survey starting July 2008 and respond to stakeholder feedback
- Produce annual report for ministers / stakeholders commencing September 2008
- Further development of community forum to support stakeholder consultation, sharing of best practice etc.
- Review infrastructure supporting corporate website and community forum to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency

2.7 Performance management of *the information authority*

- Manage *the information authority* against performance criteria agreed annually by *the information authority* board.

Una Bennett

Last updated - 16/09/08

Appendix D

Progress report

Activities for last period (June to September 2008)

1. Stakeholder engagement

Key points: consultation on the ILR specification changes for 2009/ 10; preparation of the annual report; engagement on awarding body issues, review of website support

Events held:

- Stakeholder consultation on awarding body data burden issues – 23rd July 2008
- *information authority* working groups

Other events attended:

- AoC CIS conference, presentation by Graham Jones – 25th June 2008
- AoC Eastern Region MI meeting - 25th June 2008
- Gloucestershire & Wiltshire partnership (WBL providers) membership meeting - 18th September 2008
- PICS software user group meeting - 16th July 2008
- Sixth Form College Forum - 12th June 2008

Other meetings / contacts:

- DIUS regular contacts
- Self regulation/Single Voice - regular contacts
- Institute for Learning – 9th June 2008
- Meetings on awarding issues – NAA, exams officers, Ofqual, QCA etc.
- Federation of Awarding Bodies Data Working Group – 16th September 2008
- UK Vocational Qualification Reform, Data Systems Group - 16th June 2008
- Local Government Association - 16th June 2008
- LLUK – several meetings
- LSC – regular contacts
- Data Service – regular contacts
- LSC / HESA/ HEFCE – 7th August 2008
- Bureaucracy Reduction Group – regular contacts including advice to DIUS/DCSF on MoG implications for data in the FE system
- Becta re SIF – 12th September 2008
- Information Standards Board – 8th July 2008
- Microsoft Principals' event – 11th July 2008
- Natspec – 19th September 2008
- Various provider visits

Annual report

- The first annual report for the authority has now been published. All board members should have seen a copy. A media plan is being agreed to publicise the work of the authority and its key achievements over the last year.

Website

- The FEConnect portal has been used to host some of the consultation around the ILR changes this year. Over 100 comments were received, and the most popular threads were viewed around 3,000 times. We are hoping to increase the participation on this forum next year by providing 'closed' communities for discussion – a facility requested by users.
- The *information authority* corporate site is currently being reviewed and a 'pop-up' survey is being explored to capture feedback from users. We are purchasing additional software to give us more control over the site, and improving its navigational structure.

2. Secretariat team

- Dave Briggs, a Change Manager, in the Community and Stakeholder team resigned. It is hoped to recruit a replacement shortly.
- Contract resource is being used to supplement the permanent team pending agreement of additional resource by the board, the LSC and DIUS.

3. Quality and standards

- Support documentation for the 2008/09 ILR specification has been published apart from one document.
- Work continued over the summer to consult on and refine data requests for the 2009/10 ILR specification. This included application of the assessment criteria published in the spring.
- The ILR specification for 2009/10 is being improved by:
 - reviewing data definitions and where these can be expressed more clearly doing so
 - identifying how each field is used in reporting and calculations and assigning ownership, and sub-ownership, of each field to a stakeholder
 - assigning a data quality standard to ILR fields
- Following the success rates report, Ofsted and the LSC have aligned FE success rates from August 2008 for 2006/07 data
- The secretariat worked with the LSC to agree with DIUS that the funding allocations for 2009/10 would be driven from F05 data at the agreed earlier close date (6th February 2009). This means that success rates and allocations will be driven by the same data.
- Further work is continuing with Ofsted and the LSC to resolve the success rate differences for Apprenticeships and Train to Gain provision
- Work continues with HESA, HEFCE, the LSC and the Data Service to improve the exchange of data on FE provision in Higher Education Institutions and vice versa.
- An impact analysis on the use of XML in conjunction with the Data Service and HESA was carried out.
- Advice to LLUK on data standards has been provided.

4. Governance

- Input has been provided to DIUS and the LSC on future working of *the information authority* post the Machinery of Government changes. This has been to preserve the independence of the authority.

- Respective responsibilities have been agreed with the Data Service, and this has informed the proposed structure of *the information authority* secretariat.

5. Budget

Spend to date and forecast for this year is detailed at Appendix E. No change is expected in the budget requirements for 2009/10 from the original submission for the Comprehensive Spending Review period.

6. Work in progress

- Key risks and issues for *the information authority's* work are listed at Appendix F.
- Work has been aligned with the Bureaucracy Reduction Group to avoid duplication of effort. In particular, the BRG is taking forward issues on Train to Gain highlighted in the Data Burden report.

Activities planned for next period (September – November 2008)

7. Stakeholder engagement

- Exhibiting and presenting at FAB conference, 14-15 October.
- Exhibiting and running breakout sessions at ALP national conference, 27-28 October.
- Exhibiting and hosting a breakout session at AoC conference 18-20 November
- Consultation workshops to cover a range of topics such as addressing data burden, improving the ILR change request process and the impact of enforcing hard closing dates.
- Wider promotion of the web portal.
- Investigating improvements to the corporate website and web portal.
- Meeting between Bill Rammell, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Graham Jones to discuss the work of the *information authority*.

8. Secretariat team

- Following agreement by the board, DIUS and the LSC, recruitment will commence to fill gaps in team.

9. Quality and Standards

- Work with the LSC to encourage the setting of a published business cycle timetable to give more certainty for providers
- Standards advice and support will be provided to initiatives such Skills Accounts
- Following agreement of changes to the ILR specification for 2009/10, work will commence on the detailed specification and guidance for providers
- Continued contribution to working groups of the Information Standards board.
- Standards development with LLUK on Staff Individualised Record.

10. Governance

Work will continue embedding governance arrangements and working practices between *the information authority* and the Data Service.

11. Budget

The formal budget submission for 2009/10 will be provided to DIUS. This is in line with the original three year forecast.

Appendix E

Financials – 2008/09

Cost item	Budget 2008/9 (£k)	Actual spend to date	Forecast outturn Sept–March
REVENUE			
Permanent Staff Costs	456	144	312
Non project temporary resource	124	40	84
Recruitment costs	25	0	25
Training, Travel and incidentals	34	14	20
Marketing costs	138	40	98
Meeting costs	13	3	10
Projects			
Data Standards	75	17	58
Paper Based Learner Documentation	100	0	100
Legal costs	16	0	16
Awarding Bodies	50	0	50
Information Standards Board definitions work	50	0	50
Outstanding to be allocated	68	0	68
Revenue Total	1,149	258	891
CAPITAL			
Buildings and Services			
Staff Support costs	90	30	60
IA Portal Development and support	40		40
Unallocated	20		20
Capital Total	151	30	120
Total Budget	1,299	288	1011

Assumptions:

- Forecast staff costs are based on best estimates of when each post will be filled and assumes that the staff business case is approved.
- Capital forecast has been reduced by £100k as a result of the *information authority* having selected a more cost effective solution for the corporate and community websites.

Budget 2009/10

Cost item	Budget 2009/10	Forecasting Assumptions
REVENUE		
Staff Costs		
Permanent Staff (previously LSC)	78,005	3 staff transferred to <i>the information authority</i> November 2007
Permanent Staff (08-09)	637,459	6 current staff plus 6 additional roles filled in 2008/9
Contractors/Temporary Staff		
Recruitment costs		
Training Costs/Travel and conference	45,000	
Total staff costs	760,464	
Marketing / communication	120,000	Stakeholder engagement
Information Authority Board	10,000	4 x meetings @ 2500 per meeting
Projects	304,687	To deliver <i>information authority</i> workplan
Revenue Total	1,195,151	Original Budget £1,195,151
CAPITAL		
Buidlings and Services		
Existing Staff (from LSC)	27,000	Support for 3 staff who transferred from LSC
Existing staff 08-09	108,000	Support for remaining 12 staff
New staff 09-10		
IA Portal Development	40,000	To support stakeholder consultation and engagement
IA Portal Service and Support	20,000	To support stakeholder consultation and engagement
Capital Total	195,000	Original Budget £260,000
Total Budget	1,390,151	Original Budget £1,455,151

Appendix F

Risks and issues

Key Issues

No.	Issue	Action
01	Machinery of Government changes. There is a need to assess how this might affect <i>the information authority</i> in future.	Ongoing dialogue with Bobbie McClelland (DIUS) with requirements having been advised to the department.
02	<i>The information authority</i> needs to determine how it will engage with local authorities in the future, as a result of MoG and the changes to FE funding	LGA board representative to provide advice and support. Existing DIUS / DCSF links with LAs to be investigated.
03	There are a number of resource gaps within <i>the information authority</i> . This is having an impact on the ability to deliver the work plan for 2008/9.	The proposed <i>information authority</i> structure is currently being reviewed and the staff business case is being presented to LSC and DIUS.

Key Risks

No	Risk Description and Impact	Mitigating Actions
01	There may be too much confusion between LSC, Data Service and the <i>information authority</i> . This could result in a duplication of effort, an inconsistent approach being adopted and reduced confidence amongst the stakeholder community.	Ongoing work with DS/LSC to clarify roles and responsibilities. Joint communication activity is being planned.
02	Stakeholder data users and FE System circumvent <i>information authority</i> decisions or do not come to <i>the information authority</i> for changes in information.	Continue with the programme of work to engage with stakeholders. Maintain relationships and interaction through the Community Website, Stakeholder events and ongoing communication activities
03	There is a risk that data standards are not agreed, resulting in the continuing mismatch of data requirements. A current example under review is ethnicity codes.	The <i>information authority</i> will, where possible, agree bilaterally or alternatively, via the Information Standards Board.
04	The future demands on <i>the information authority</i> from the Data Service may be such that <i>the information authority</i> may not be able to manage through the lack of resources.	The DS Governance structure will include representation from <i>the information authority</i> and Graham Jones will be sitting on the DS Board. Staffing requirements for the <i>information authority</i> will be kept under review.
05	The outputs from the Data Burden Study are not addressed by the appropriate owners, recommendations are not achievable, or other LSC priorities result in the inability to address issues in timely manner.	<i>The information authority</i> is working with different departments to agree firm actions plans. Where these are not forthcoming, the secretariat will escalate to the board.