



Working Up the Offender Learning Campus Model

Background Paper for an Ideas-Building Event at St. George's House, Windsor Castle, 8th – 9th June 2006

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to this confidential ideas-building event. We're especially delighted that Phil Hope, MP, Under-Secretary of State for Skills will be joining our discussions.

This event follows on from a session we held on 7th April to define what we mean by the campus model and sharpen up its key design features. Our next stage was to test out our thinking so far with Regional Offender Managers, who would play a key role in the design and delivery of a campus model, and with offenders who would benefit from learning through a campus model.

The proposals in the Green paper, 'Reducing Offending through Skills & Employment' have been widely discussed and attracted a lot of interest through the consultation period. There is particular interest in how the ideas in the Green Paper fit together and build on what's already there.

The purpose of this event is to build on our recent thinking and consultations. In particular, our goals will be to:

- confirm the relationship between two of the 'big ideas' in the Green Paper: the Offender Learner Campus and the Employability Contract;
- draw up a 10 year framework highlighting key milestones of development in the introduction of both the campus and the employability contract. We also want to firm up how their development could fit within the Home Office's Five Year Strategy for protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending and dovetail with the establishment of the Corporate and Civic Alliances;
- agree what needs to happen within the next 6-12 months to test out and continue to develop our thinking and ideas.

We also feel it is important to stress that whenever possible we want to **build on** approaches to education, training and employment that are proving effective in helping to reduce re-offending. We are **not** about re-inventing wheels, but we are about achieving greater clarity and impact.

To do this, we're sure you agree that there is scope for improvement, and that things will need to work differently if we're going to achieve this improvement. Where we may well differ is on our views about the changes that need to take place.

There are bound to be some very strong opinions amongst us: but we hope that this won't stop those with strong views at least considering others' viewpoints. We ask everyone joining the event to be prepared to be as open minded as possible, and to accept that we are engaging in areas of debate in which there is **no one solution** and that **no one can be certain of the best way ahead**.

This can sound risky to some – and feel even riskier as we go through the process – but the great pay-off is that it really does give us the opportunity to break new ground in our thinking.

Those of you who have worked with us before also know that we don't go for set speeches or pre-arranged working groups. However good, opening speeches – even those delivered by Ministers! - they encourage the 'us and them' habit, with one or two people being expected to produce all the answers, and the rest of us lobbing in questions and indulging in the sport of picking holes in their arguments! We want to begin this event as we mean to continue – with a fast flowing informal discussion, in which we **all** feel that we have a responsibility to put forward ideas and, in doing so, **take risks** in breaking new ground.

This approach reflects the aim of St. George's House to create an atmosphere of trust in which well-informed people can bring fresh thinking to key issues that will have impact on our future. The House is **NOT** the sort of place where delegates with badges listen to speeches. It **IS** a place where free spirits can try out new ideas without fearing the consequences.

We will be welcoming a number of you to St. George's House for the first time, which is why we'd like to forewarn those booked into the House that when you arrive, you will find that you are not offered a key to your room. This is quite intentional, and is because the Dean, Canons and Warden welcome you to the House, as their home. We hope that you'll feel that you can enter into the spirit of the place as a safe and welcoming environment, and that the experience will be both creative and enjoyable. We very much look forward to welcoming you to St George's House on 8th June.

Kryisia Hudek & Simon Wilson

2nd June 2006

Key Timings and Contact Numbers

On pages 2 -3 are outlined our key timings for the two days. If anyone needs to contact you urgently whilst you're attending the event, the 'phone number for St. George's House is **01753 848848** and the fax number is **01753 848849**. The report of the event will be posted on the Open Agenda website by Monday, 19th June.

When you arrive, you will find your name badge on a table in the Patricia Hotung Room, on the ground floor of St. George's House. We are just putting first names on badges to make it easier to see each other's names, and also to spare us what can be the 'creeping death' of introductions. We are very keen to create an informal atmosphere during our time together, and we have found that making a point of using each other's names – instead of saying "*I agree or disagree with the person over there, who's name I can't remember!*" really does help people to relax and spark creative discussion. Please don't think we're being over familiar!

Agenda

<p>Thursday, 8th June</p> <p>From 11.30 am onwards</p> <p>12.15 pm</p> <p>1.30 – 3.00 pm</p> <p>3.00 pm</p> <p>3.10 – 4.50 pm</p> <p>4.55 – 5.05pm</p> <p>5.15 – 6.00 pm</p>	<p>Arrival at St. George's House</p> <p>Light sandwich lunch</p> <p>Opening session <i>Focus:</i> We want to open our discussions by asking ourselves: what is the purpose of offenders' learning campus and the employability contract? What we are trying to achieve? And how will we measure impact?</p> <p>Once we're clear about their purpose, we want to consider whether we are persuaded that the two ideas work well as single integrated model, or if some of us feel that we should also explore alternative approaches that can build on the new Offenders Learning & Skills Service and what is already working well</p> <p>Short break</p> <p>Second Session <i>Focus:</i> During this session we want to give some space to sharpen up alternative approaches (if any are put forward) as well as consider criteria for delivery, the rights and responsibilities of offenders, and how we can reduce the risk of the potential 'show stoppers' we identify</p> <p>Tea</p> <p>Sung Evensong in St. George's Chapel for those who would like to attend.</p>
<p>6.00 – 7.30 pm</p>	<p>Third session <i>Focus:</i> At this stage, we want to work up in some detail specific elements of either the integrated campus/contract model or alternatives put forward. In doing so, we want to flag up the additional value of our proposals to the exchequer, society, offenders and offender managers, and consider a timeframe for the phased introduction of the model developed</p>

7.30 pm	Pre-dinner drinks
8.00 pm	Dinner in St George's House Dining Room
9.45 pm	Private Tour of the Chapel led by Andrew Carter, Warden of St. George's
9.15 am	Fourth session <i>Focus:</i> Consider the model(s) we've worked through in detail to appraise their added value and how their phased introduction would fit within the Home Office's 5 year strategy and dovetail and link with the establishment of the Corporate and Civic Alliances
11.00	Short break
11.10 am	Fifth and final session <i>Focus:</i> Develop our thinking and an outline action plan to test out and further develop the model over the next 6 – 12 months Before ending, we will draw out from participants what for them, personally, has been of the most value in this event how it has helped sharpen up any actions they will now take
12.30 pm	End of event, followed by lunch

Our approach to the event

At an event like this you might expect to begin with a 'round robin' of introductions, followed closely by two or three opening presentations outlining the context of our discussions and the key issues we want to tackle.

But as those of you who have worked with us before know we adopt a different approach.

We've found that the problem with introductions is that it's not only difficult to remember who everyone is but also, to some extent, can 'pigeon hole' people as likely to have particular views on the issues we want to tackle. From the very outset, we want to feel that we are 'free spirits' in our discussions, representing no one but ourselves, and **ready to shift in our thinking** if the discussions persuade us to do so.

So, following a brief welcome and confirmation of the ground rules for the event, we want to open our discussions by asking the BIG question:

What is the purpose of the offenders' learning campus and the employability contract?

Once we've identified our headline goals we want to ask whether we are all persuaded that the new integrated model outlined overleaf is the most effective way of building on what we have now and the introduction of the Offenders Learning and Skills Service (OLASS).

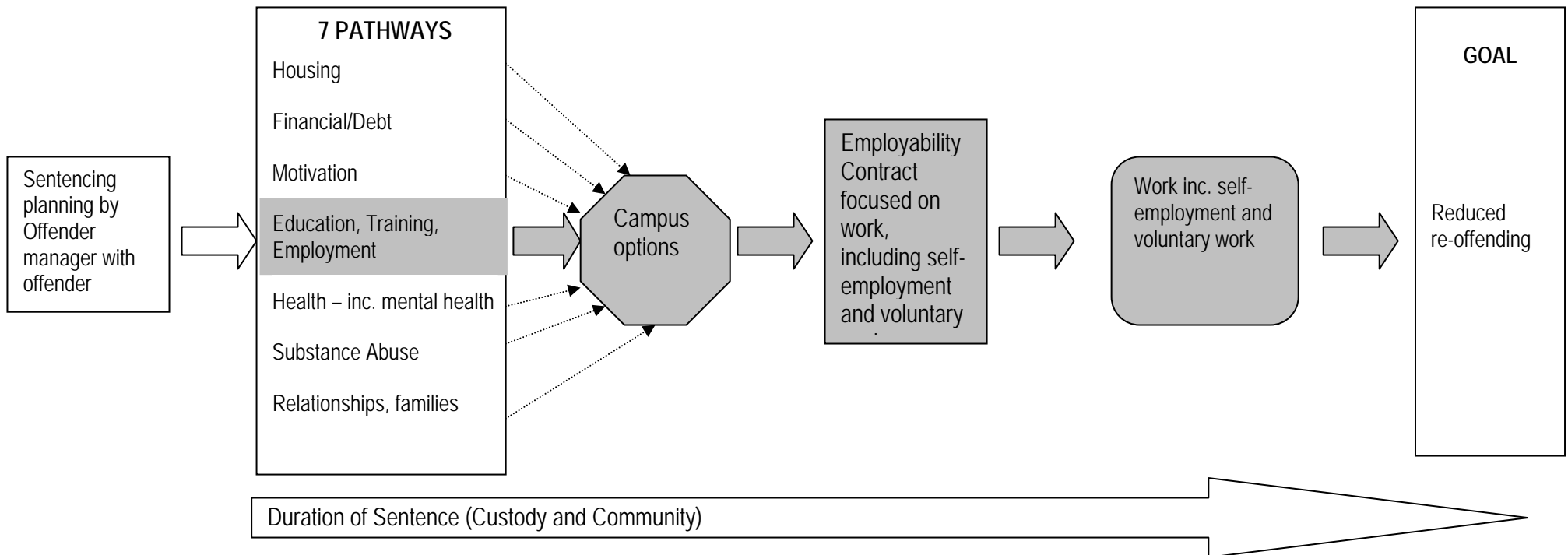
We don't want you feel boxed in to signing up to the model if you feel that there is a more compelling alternative.

However, there does need to be alternative! So if you feel that you could put forward a different approach that you feel would be fitter for purpose than the model overleaf, this will be the stage in our discussions that we will want to explore it.

During the remainder of the afternoon and evening, we want to sharpen up any fuzzy (or fudged!) aspects of the models, and strive to achieve as much clarity as possible in defining the additional value to different stakeholders (society, the exchequer, offenders, those working with offenders) that the new approach would provide.

REDUCING RE-OFFENDING THROUGH SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT: TAKING FORWARD KEY IDEAS IN THE GREEN PAPER

Positioning the Campus and Contract Models – 1st Phase



Once we've developed a shared understanding about the model we are proposing, the following morning we want to consider how well it fits within the Home Office's wider 5 year strategy, including the introduction of OLASS and the establishment of the Corporate and Civic Alliances.

Overleaf on page 6, we've begun to sketch out a 5 year timeline of the major changes that have taken place or planned by the Home Office and Dept for Education & Skills and their Agencies.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. We're sure that you'll be able to add to it. It has been included to highlight that the development of a model for the education, training and employment of offenders should **not be considered in isolation** to all else that is happening.

What we want to do at Windsor is to identify how we can stitch the model for education, training and employment together with the other changes into a single timeline to maximise synergy and impact and avoid work overload and initiative fatigue.

In our final session, we will firm up the actions that we feel should happen over the next 6 – 12 months, such as testing out the model in particular regions with, perhaps, specific groups of offenders.

We determine the agenda

One of the key principles of the way we run events is that we determine the agenda as we go, in order to get the most from our time together. This means that, at any stage of our discussions, we can change the structure of a session, if we feel that it will help us achieve stronger outputs from the event. We say this, with one important proviso.

We find that groups go away far more satisfied with what we have accomplished by the end of an event, if we start off with a commitment to achieving **as much clarity as possible** in our discussions, and really push ourselves in **breaking new ground** and **moving ideas forward**.

Working in idea-generating groups

As an important part of the ideas-building process, we will break into 'idea-generating' groups during the event to tackle key questions raised through our discussions. The purpose of these groups is to focus on sharpening up the issues and developing ideas that we want to pick up and run

with. Please use your time in groups to sound out your ideas and do **not** be tempted into trying to develop a group view.

We use these groups because it gives everyone an opportunity to think through different points of view and have their say, when this would be impossible as one large group because of time constraints. As a result, a number of different – even opposing – ideas can emerge from small group discussions.

This is what we're after: ideas and not a group view. For those who haven't worked in this way before, it's worth saying that it really helps us to leave the groups behind, if you make a point of **not** sitting with members of your group afterwards, and agree to outlaw the phrases "we think" or "my group thought that".

"We think" makes it difficult for group members to change their minds without feeling disloyal to their group. Also, "we think" has more authority than "I think" and, completely unintentionally, can make it less easy for others to challenge or discard ideas.

We will also break into groups for longer periods of time to '**build ideas**'. In this instance, it is more likely (but not certain!) that there will be agreement amongst members of the group. What we ask is that when you come to share your thinking with the rest of us, you **just give us the idea**. Please don't feel you need to share the journey your group has travelled in developing this idea! If we are not clear about its rationale, we can always ask questions.

Going with the flow

We need to manage our time together carefully as one large group, if we're going to develop the momentum we need to move our discussions forward.

Developing ideas needs careful listening. Let's try and stick to the rule that when someone comes in on the discussion, they **follow on** from what the person before them has said, before moving on and starting a fresh train of thought. Please also resist the temptation of making more than one point! As soon as someone says "*I'd just like to make two or three points at this stage in our discussions*" the ideas stop flowing, as we are drawn to recap on what's gone before.

Of course, when we're together as one large group we want **as many people as possible to participate**: brainstorming is not a spectator event! So we will both do our best to ensure that the more confident, natural talkers amongst us don't squeeze others out.

TIMELINE – HOME OFFICE/DfES, SOME RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

By end 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up the National Offender Management Services to bring together Prison and Probation Services and established Regional Offender Managers in each of the Government regions ● LSC contracted with providers to deliver the new Offender Learning & Skills Service (OLASS) ● Introduced electronic tagging on bail ● Developed and trialled good practice designed to tackle women's offending (WORP) ● Introduced new community and suspended sentence orders ● Set up 3 Alliances (including the Corporate and Civic Alliances) to help tackle re-offending. This includes obtaining the support of business leaders to act as 'champions' of the Civic Alliance, and drawing on skill gaps and labour shortages work with employers and Jobcentre Plus to place offenders in jobs. ● Introduce Community Payback (5 million hours of compulsory unpaid work per annum) ● Sector Skills Council, Skills for Justice fully operational
By end 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trialled intermittent custody ● Laid out plans for contestability in the provision of services in a detailed prospectus ● Introduced legislation to set up probation trusts ● Set out a strategy for the prison estate (including the development of community prisons) ● Rolled out offender management ● Introduced the new short prison sentence of custody plus ● Introduced new occupational standards for staff
2008	
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Completed the roll out of offender management to all offenders ● Have established a better IT system for managing offenders with OASys system fully integrated into C-NOMIS ● Legislated for a new sentencing framework for juveniles ● Introduced day fines
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced re-offending by 10%

Meeting everyone's expectations

We are bound to arrive at Windsor with very different views about what should be our key priorities in taking forward a model to improve education, training and employment opportunities for offenders. This is why we should give ourselves some time early on to work through **as a group** the issues we feel are most important for us to tackle during our time together.

Developing ideas is always a messy process, especially during the opening stages! It can be frustrating for those who like to focus quickly on what they feel is **the** key issue that needs to be tackled, and want to get on with sorting it out. The difficulty with this approach is that one person's key issue is another's back burner!

So, we would like to ask that we all try to be as relaxed as

possible in the opening session, and let as many people as time allows to have their say, so that we can build up a head of steam **as a group** in identifying the issues we want to explore in greater depth.

Overleaf are the Conventions of St. George's House for consultations and brainstorming events held here at Windsor Castle. At the beginning of the event, we will ask you if you are happy to adopt them as ground rules for our discussions. We very much hope that you'll be open to giving them a go, as experience has shown that their application can make an enormous difference to both the quality of debate and the ideas that emerge. **And given the diversity, experience and expertise we have between us, who knows what we might achieve by lunchtime on 9th June.**

St. George's House Conventions

1. *Please be open to changing your mind*

We hope that during your time at the House you will see yourself as a “free spirit”, open to the possibility that the opinions you hold most dearly, on the topic under discussion, might actually be wrong. Once we each take that step, we find that it is much easier to persuade others to question their own assumptions, as well.

2. *Please do not attribute remarks to individuals after the event*

At all House events, we ask groups to agree at the outset that comments made in plenary or small group sessions will not be attributed to individuals afterwards. We have a firm convention that people should not be quoted without their permission, and commend this to you most strongly.

3. *Please take risks with ideas*

The most successful Consultations at the House have been those where individuals feel sufficiently relaxed, and supported by others, to be able to take risks with ideas. This requires a high degree of trust among a group, and we hope that from the outset you will seek to build that trust.

4. *Please try and avoid any false consensus*

We hope that if you find a consensus emerging in your discussions, you will check to ensure that it is soundly based. It can sometimes be very difficult for individuals to resist the pressure to agree with their peers, and we hope that healthy debate will not be stifled by a false consensus.

5. *Please use “plain English”*

At just about every event, one of the biggest struggles is with the weight of technical language that some speakers tend to use, and others leave unchallenged for fear of displaying ignorance. We ask **everyone** joining a Consultation at the House to avoid using acronyms, and to be ready to intervene in debate to ask colleagues to use “plain English”.

Andrew Carter

Warden of St. George's House