**GUIDANCE FOR BRANCHES:**

**UNISON’s position in the discussions:**

* We need to seek to reach agreement on job security, protection of pensions, pay and terms and conditions.
* We should also aim to prevent further privatisation.
* UNISON is committed to arguing for a properly funded further education sector that is accessible to all.

**Representation and consultation**

* All area reviews need both full time and lay officials to take part in the discussions. Branches should liaise with their FE activists to ensure representation from the colleges.
* While not all colleges can be represented at the meetings it will be important to facilitate meetings with activists and members in as many of the colleges affected as possible.
* UNISON teams’ starting point should be to argue for representation on the local area steering groups.
* At the start it will be important to agree the frequency and dates of the meetings and what data will be shared i.e. minutes, steering group papers, etc.
* Seek an agreement to full consultation on any implications for staff arising out of the review.
* At the point in the process (usually meeting four) when proposals are made, formal discussions need to take place within colleges for any staff at risk.

**Additional guidance**

* We understand that this process is complex and that lay officials involved in the discussions may wish to seek guidance. If this is the case, your initial port of call should be the [negotiating and bargaining page](https://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/negotiating-and-bargaining/) on the UNISON website.

**Requests for information from the review steering groups**

* It will be important to establish the timetable for the review and the meeting dates. This information should be fed into the centre to allow a central overview of the reviews.
* All the information that is being provided to the area steering groups should be provided to the trade unions. Please see the list of specific information that we should request in the grey box below.
* A number of colleges have been seeking to pre-empt the reviews and are in discussions with other colleges to merge or create federations. You need to request any details of such proposals and in particular the impact in terms of staff and estates.

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| **Information to request during the area review process*** Details of the standard pay rates and terms and conditions for each of the colleges involved in the review and copies of the handbooks.
* Details of any redundancy policies or severance schemes operated by each college.
* Numbers of staff employed by grade in each college.
* Details of the pension schemes operated by each college.
* Details of the colleges’ share of any deficit to the LGPS.
* List of college estates.
* Details of estate utilisation.
* Details of any estate rationalisation proposed.
* Details of any agreements with any subcontractors.
* Numbers of staff employed by subcontractors.
* Pay and terms of conditions for staff employed by subcontractors.
* Colleges overall financial position.
* Operating surplus/deficit.
* Financial forecasts.
* Borrowing (including as a percentage of turnover).
* Staff costs (including as a percentage of turnover).
* Non staff costs (including as a percentage of turnover).
* Student numbers.
* Average class sizes.
* Numbers of apprenticeships provided.
* Ofsted reports.
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