

Appendix A



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL



Establishing Readiness for 16-19

Commissioning

Stage 2 Proposals for

the Sub-Regional Grouping of

Bedford Borough, Central

Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and

Luton

(East of England Region)

February 2009

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Introduction

This sub-regional grouping (SRG) covers the following local authorities:

- Bedford Borough Council
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Luton Borough Council

It should be noted that Bedfordshire County Council will cease to exist from March 31st 2009 and two new authorities will be created: Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. For the present, the two authorities will operate a shared 14-19 service.

The two new authorities are in the process of forming councils, developing staff structures and recruiting staff and have very new senior teams, so fully engaging in the process of preparing this submission has been challenging, especially given current capacity issues. However, both authorities have been involved at regional and sub-regional level and are fully signed up to this approach.

The purpose of the SRG is to ensure efficient and effective commissioning of 16-19 provision across its area (and for learners within the individual local authority boundaries) as well as around its borders.

This SRG came together because travel to learn patterns indicate this is likely to be the most effective commissioning grouping for the area. There is substantial learner flow between the borders of the four authorities, but there is also flow across the borders from London boroughs and into/from neighbouring authorities such as Essex, Cambridgeshire and Milton Keynes. This will be explored in more detail in Section 2.8.

Sub-regional grouping meetings started in November 2008 and are currently planned monthly. Future frequency of meetings will depend on the needs of the business planning cycle and linked activity. Minutes are issued following each meeting. SRG meetings are attended by Directors for Children's Services or their representative, 14-19 Strategy Managers for each local authority, an LSC representative during the transition and the Regional Programme Manager for the 16-19 Transition.

SRG activity is strongly linked with the Regional Planning Group, at which all Directors for Children's Services are represented, as well as members of EEDA, GO East and the Learning and Skills Council (the latter to be replaced by representatives of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and Skills Funding Agency (SFA) following transition. Funding from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Programme (RIEP) has facilitated the appointment of a Regional Programme Manager for the 16-19 Transition, working across the region with each of the SRGs and local authorities supporting the development of a consistent, whole region plan and sharing

practice. Additionally, consultants have been appointed to assist the local authorities with establishing their readiness for the commissioning role.

All local authorities within the region are signed up to a set of aims that should ensure a successful outcome for the transition programme and the 14-19 agenda and will be reflected in activity undertaken by each authority. These aims are shown as **APPENDIX 1**.

This sub-regional grouping is confident of its ability to be able to take responsibility for commissioning from April 2010 and to operate shadow arrangements from September 2009.

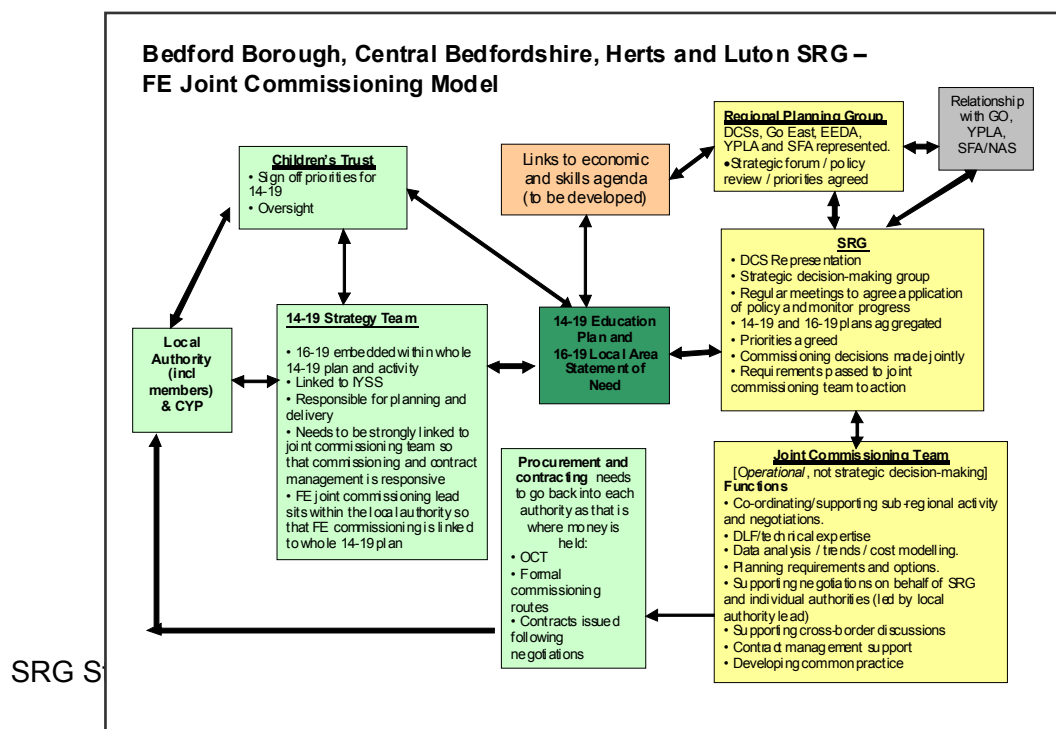
1. Management and Governance of the Sub-Regional Grouping

1.1. Commissioning Model

1.1.1. The Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Luton Sub-Regional Grouping (SRG) has agreed to operate a joint commissioning approach for 16-19 provision (working within the new National Commissioning Framework) which will involve the establishment of a joint commissioning team, where each individual will have principal accountability to their home local authority. This team will include shared specialist technical support for the commissioning of FE provision and will work within an agreed joint commissioning framework. This team's work will be led by a co-ordinator who will be accountable to the sub-regional grouping and line managed by the DCS Chair of the SRG.

1.1.2. The areas that the SRG will commission jointly will be FE and apprenticeship provision, but it is recognised that there will also be a need to review this in the context of planning other 16-19 and 14-19 provision such as NEET and pre-NEET interventions, school sixth form provision, apprenticeships and Foundation Learning Tier/Progression Pathways provision.

1.1.3. The four local authorities will each employ staff that will have responsibility for 16-19 FE joint commissioning. These staff will work collaboratively to ensure joined-up 14-19 planning and commissioning, both in-area and with the other local authorities in the region, and they will lead on the commissioning of appropriate FE 16-19 provision for their area and the entire SRG, linked to a team providing co-ordination and specialist technical support for the SRG as a whole. The diagram below demonstrates how the SRG see this operating and how the commissioning and accountability routes will be aligned.



A full-page version of this diagram is available in **APPENDIX 2**.

- 1.1.4.** This diagram demonstrates the links from the joint commissioning team back into each individual local authority to ensure that the agenda is firmly embedded within the 14-19 plans of each LA as well as reflecting national, regional and sub-regional priorities.
- 1.1.5.** Each local authority will set out its 14-19 commissioning plans, showing how its commissioning intentions for FE provision sit alongside commissioning intent for sixth form college, school sixth form and apprenticeship provision to serve the needs of the resident population. The overall plan will also need to reference links to LAA and Children's Trust targets and the adults skills and economic agendas. The development of these plans will be supported by data and intelligence aggregated and analysed by the technical support team.
- 1.1.6.** Each local authority's plan will be validated by its 14-19 Partnership and through its Children's Trust/relevant members.
- 1.1.7.** These plans will then be aggregated at Sub-Regional Grouping level, where Directors for Children's Services and their key staff will agree joint priorities and outline requirements for FE commissioning discussions. The SRG will make commissioning decisions for the whole sub-region. The joint commissioning team (which will comprise the FE 16-19 commissioning leads within each LA and the shared technical support team) will then ensure that negotiations are undertaken, relevant information is brought back for further consideration and moderation (involving input from the Regional Planning Group) and that agreed actions are implemented.
- 1.1.8.** There will be a single conversation with each FE provider (informed by the SRG joint plan), led by the key 16-19 commissioning lead from the authority in which the college's main site is located. This will be supported by the analysis of data aggregated from local authority, YPLA and other sources to provide a sub-regional view.
- 1.1.9.** Aggregated requirements for the purchase of apprenticeship provision will be passed on to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) who will undertake the commissioning and contract management of this provision on behalf of the local authorities, so there will be no direct commissioning relationship with the providers. This link with the SFA may be direct or via the Regional Planning Group, depending on the emerging structures of the SFA.
- 1.1.10.** In accordance with the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) approach, the four local authorities represented in this SRG share a common understanding that commissioning is the end to end process by which provision will be planned and delivered so that:

- the local authorities will build a common understanding of the needs of young people resident across the SRG area, based on qualitative and quantitative evidence
- priorities will be agreed for the SRG as a whole, taking into account the needs of the four individual local authorities and their residents
- provision will be strategically planned to meet those needs, taking into account the learner and employer voice, working with potential providers, and with due consideration to value for money
- provision is commissioned from outside the SRG borders (through discussion with neighbouring authorities/regions) where this is appropriate to meet the needs and choices of learners
- provision will be secured from the most appropriate providers, with the four authorities developing a diverse, sustainable provider base
- provision will be monitored for performance against expected outcomes, with future commissioning decisions being informed by data collected at agreed points throughout the year.
- appropriate progression routes can be identified for learners.

1.1.11. Local authorities will undertake planning based on the needs of their residents. The commissioning decisions for FE provision will, of necessity, be based on funding by individual FE institutions, therefore it is seen as essential that the collaborative plans of the SRG are brought together in order to ensure joint delivery of the needs of the residents across each of the areas. There will also be a need to plan across borders, both within the region and outside, and this is further discussed in Section 2.8.

1.1.12. **APPENDIX 3** contains a business planning cycle diagram. This is based upon the business planning cycle information issued by DCSF in October 2008 and indicates the current understanding of where the SRG and local authorities fit into the process.

1.1.13. **The joint commissioning agreement** – In order to establish an effective and efficient joint commissioning arrangement, discussions will take place in SRG meetings over the next few months, linked to work going on within each local authority to scope out the staffing and structures required (see also Section 3.1).

1.1.14. Further work will commence on designing the joint commissioning team structure from March 09, but plans cannot be fully developed until information emerges on the numbers, locations and skills of staff who will transfer across from LSCs into the local authorities as well as the funding that local authorities will have to maintain this infrastructure.

1.2. Governance

- 1.2.1** The individual local authorities have agreed the SRG and Regional Planning Group composition with either Members or senior officers and Directors for Children's Services have delegated authority to agree the operating model for commissioning and the governance structures for the SRG and to make this Stage 2 submission to DCSF.
- 1.2.2** For Bedford Borough Council this Stage 2 submission has been agreed within the local authority by the Director for Children's Services and an appropriate elected member.
- 1.2.3** Central Bedfordshire Council is not in a position to give political endorsement to the Stage 2 submission at this stage. The Director for Children, Families and Learning fully endorses the Sub-Regional Grouping Stage 2 proposals and political agreement will be sought once the new Council has been elected.
- 1.2.4** In Hertfordshire County Council, the approval of the Stage 2 submission has been given, under delegated authority, by the Director of Children, Schools and Families, in consultation with the Executive Member for Education (see **APPENDIX 4a**).
- 1.2.5** In Luton, following approval by Executive, on 6 October 2008, to establishing the sub-regional grouping (see **APPENDIX 4b**), the Executive gave approval for this Stage 2 proposal on 16 February 2009 (see **APPENDIX 4c**).
- 1.2.6** It has been agreed that the strategy for the SRG (which makes joint decisions on commissioning 16-19 provision for the area) should be steered by a Sub-Regional Grouping Board comprising Directors for Children's Services (or a delegated deputy) for the four authorities, the 14-19 lead officers from each local authority and, during the transition period, senior officers from the LSC and the Regional Programme Manager for 16-19 Transition. The group will be chaired by one of the four DCSs on a rotating one-year basis.
- 1.2.7** Each of the members of the SRG is agreed that it is essential that each local authority has equal voice within the group and all are equally supported by the joint commissioning arrangements. This is particularly important in a group which has one large county authority and three small unitary authorities, two of which are just in the process of forming.
- 1.2.8** Additionally, it is agreed that all strategic decisions made by the SRG must be clear and transparent for the benefit of both individual local authority accountability and to ensure consistency and open dealing with providers. All meetings will continue to be minuted and decisions will be recorded, evidence-based and unanimously agreed.

- 1.2.9** During the transitional period, the SRG will work closely with senior staff within the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities and appropriate staffing.
- 1.2.10** The SRG will report to the Regional Planning Group (RPG) so that plans can also be aggregated regionally, consistent approaches can be agreed and maintained and practice shared. The RPG will also have a role in moderating the funding allocations and in managing the policy development and communications relationship with the YPLA and SFA. The Director for Children's Services from each of the four authorities is represented on the Regional Forum.
- 1.2.11** The future relationships with the emerging Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and its subsidiary organisation, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) are not yet clear. The development of the SRG's joint commissioning arrangements will take account of the structure of these organisations as details emerge and it becomes clear how the SRG and its joint commissioning team will interface with the new bodies.
- 1.2.12** The detailed operation of the SRG and joint commissioning arrangements will be discussed and agreed at meetings over the coming months, with a view to a formal agreement between the local authorities being in place by September 2009. This agreement will be reviewed and signed off within each local authority by the Director for Children's Services and the appropriate elected members. This will be a legally binding agreement, but will have formal review windows built in so that the operation can be evaluated and adapted as required.
- 1.2.13** The Sub-Regional Grouping will publish, twice a year (at appropriate points of the business cycle), a report of its activity to the groups to which local authority representatives are accountable, that is the Cabinet, Scrutiny and Overview Committee and the Children's Trust in each local authority area (according to governance in each authority). This will ensure that there is challenge within the process and full accountability to elected members. These joint bi-annual reports from the SRG will set out the outcomes achieved in the previous year and the commissioning priorities and intentions for the following year. The timing of these reports will be set to align with the 16-19 business planning cycle and annual updating of the Children and Young People's Plan for each local authority area. Additionally, the 14-19 Plans and aggregated SRG plan will be published on individual local authority websites.
- 1.2.14** Additionally, the respective CYP Lead Members and Chairs of Children's Trusts of the four local authorities comprising the SRG will be kept fully informed with reports of developments at key stages throughout the year (for example when the 14-19 plan is refreshed and a copy of the Local Area Statement of Need (LASN), which details the requirements for 16-19, can be taken to members).

- 1.2.15** As the 16-19 provision becomes embedded within the whole 14-19 strategy following transition, it is likely that the Local Area Statement of Need (LASN) currently produced as a prelude to 16-19 commissioning will become subsumed within the 14-19 Education Plan.
- 1.2.16** The link between responsibility for commissioning and accountability that is routed through Children's Trusts will be maintained. This will ensure that the Children's Trust in each local authority area will continue to maintain an overview of provision and outcomes in their area (and will have oversight of the Local Area Statement of Need and 14-19 plan).
- 1.2.17** The terms of reference for the Sub-Regional Grouping of Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Luton are attached at **APPENDIX 5**.
- 1.2.18** SRG meetings are currently held monthly (and more frequent meetings are arranged around key work). A more developed timetable will emerge from the construction of the commissioning timeline to commence from June 2009 and this will initially follow the previous LSC business cycle pattern (see **APPENDIX 3** for current business planning cycle diagram).
- 1.2.19** It should be noted that the business planning cycle currently works on an academic year basis, with allocations being made by the end of March to FE providers for the following academic year and the SRG is committed to planning to ensure timely decisions to ensure that allocations are made within what are understood to be usually very tight national timeframes. The SRG will be working with the LSC on developing a business cycle for 2010/11 that can incorporate the SRG and Regional Planning Group structures.
- 1.2.20** The SRG understands however that there may be a change towards making allocations on a financial year basis, which will have an impact on the commissioning cycle for the SRG joint commissioning team being developed and for FE providers. Further information is awaited from DCSF in order to establish future plans and evaluate the implications of any potential change for the SRG and for provider operation.
- 1.2.21 Dispute resolution** - The four local authorities are absolutely committed to strategic commissioning and to the establishment of an effective joint commissioning approach for 16-19 provision. They will aim to jointly plan 14-19 provision where relevant (for example diploma delivery and NEET prevention strategies across borders etc) to ensure linkages early in the planning process, which should mitigate against the occurrence of disputes. However, it is also recognised that processes should be put in place to resolve any issues that might occur

around commissioning of provision, the operation of the joint commissioning team or any other areas.

1.2.22 In order to ensure clarity and equal voice in planning, the SRG will produce a Commissioning Plan based on an agreed funding proposal. Planning arrangements will ensure that:

- there is a proven and reliable evidence base which is accepted by each local authority in the SRG
- the priorities of each local authority are clearly set out and are understood by each member of the SRG and the shared service team
- scenario planning is undertaken which leads to agreement within the SRG about, for example, how resources will be allocated in the event of 'steady state' funding, varying levels of increase (perhaps 1%, 2%, 3%) and varying levels of reduction.

1.2.23 With these elements in place it will be reasonable to aspire to a position where the SRG can operate effectively, make reasonable resource allocation decisions and disputes will be avoided.

1.2.24 Should a dispute arise which cannot be resolved in the usual course of planning, analysis and discussion of priorities then the following process will be followed:

Step 1 - it will be referred to a panel of the four Directors of Children's Services from each of the local authorities. There will be no voting; either the dispute will be resolved by unanimous agreement or not at all.

Step 2 - If the dispute cannot be resolved at that level, then the issue will be settled by a panel of three Directors for Children's Services drawn from outside this SRG but from within the Eastern Region. In this case, there will be a simple majority voting arrangement if necessary. This panel will be able to accept any of the propositions put to it by the disagreeing parties, mediate or escalate the problem to a full meeting of the Regional Planning Group.

1.2.25. With regard to allocation disputes, it is the Regional Planning Group and the YPLA who will have ultimate responsibility for moderating allocations within the region and the YPLA will gain final authority nationally before final allocations can be confirmed.

1.3. SRG Links to Local Authority Planning Structures

1.3.1. APPENDIX 6 contains structural charts and information for each of the local authorities within the SRG. These indicate the relationship of the new 16-19 responsibilities with the Children's Trusts, Children and Young People's Plan and 14-19 partnerships and planning. They also

demonstrate links to the adult skills agenda and economic agenda, including LAA/LSP/sustainable communities work.

- 1.3.2.** Although each local authority has adult education responsibilities and is involved in the development of local community strategies and local and regional sustainability projects, the SRG acknowledges that there are currently limited formal routes in place to ensure that the economic and adult skills agendas are adequately embedded in 14-19 planning across the area to ensure a smooth transition for learners to adult services employment opportunities.
- 1.3.3.** The SRG are committed to ensuring that this is effectively covered as the SRG matures and plans for joint commissioning develop over the coming months. Reference to the adult skills and economic agenda is seen as essential to creating a strong and sustainable base for future commissioning of 14-19 provision. In discussion with the East of England Development Agency (EEDA), it has been agreed that the most appropriate way to ensure this link initially is for EEDA to establish regular direct contact with 14-19 teams.
- 1.3.4.** Additionally, consultancy support has been commissioned regionally to establish the most effective routes to ensuring that the adult skills and economic agenda is firmly embedded in 14-19 planning and to determine how SRGs can ensure that they are able to gather effective supply and demand data for future planning.
- 1.3.5.** The Regional Planning Group will have overall responsibility for ensuring that 14-19 strategy is more joined-up with the adult skills and economic agendas and EEDA and the LSC (later YPLA and SFA) are members of this group, so will provide input and advice. Further work is needed to tie up these agendas and information is awaited on the emerging structure and responsibilities of the SFA, Integrated Employment Services developments and the potential emergence of Employment and Skills Boards to see how this might be developed further in the future.

1.4. Financial Accountability

- 1.4.1** The SRG has agreed the fundamental principle that the individual local authorities should bear financial accountability for the resources allocated to them, as neither the SRG nor the joint commissioning team will be an appropriate legal entity. In terms of accountability for delivery however (see 1.4.5), local authorities will be accountable for the delivery of their plan and for ensuring good outcomes for learners from all colleges where they have joint commissioning responsibility.
- 1.4.2** Financial accountability within each local authority of the SRG will be based on existing LA auditing and accountability arrangements.

- 1.4.3** Members will also be informed through the Local Area Statement of Need (LASN), which details the requirements for 16-19, being routed through the Children's Trust for approval and broad spending authority, as well as a copy of the LASN being taken to members.
- 1.4.4** Funding will flow direct from the local authority which has been allocated the funds to the relevant provider.
- 1.4.5** There will also be accountability in the planning process as, during the planning cycle, the SRG joint commissioning team will review data (for example FE college financial returns) received from YPLA/SFA and information on how FE colleges have achieved recruitment targets and, for apprenticeships, they will also be able to track drawdown against priorities and targets. This will provide assurance that value for money is being provided and targets are met.
- 1.4.6** In this way, the local authorities will gain assurance that the resources they allocate to providers are being used appropriately to secure the provision they are commissioning on behalf of learners in the sub-region. The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data provided by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) to local authorities will provide assurance that funded numbers are being achieved.
- 1.4.7** Additionally, the local authorities might consider it appropriate in exceptional circumstances that they agree with providers for the local authority's internal audit service to undertake such assurance work as a reasonable risk assessment might dictate.
- 1.4.8** However, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) will have overall responsibility for the audit of FE colleges. The SRG will therefore develop an appropriate relationship with the SFA that will include links for passing pre- and post-audit information.

1.5. Embedding the Learner and Employer Voice

- 1.5.1.** All four local authorities are committed to the principle that their individual commissioning plans that feed into the SRG should reflect the "**learner voice**". This will be achieved through a number of channels, including:
- consultation arrangements organised by the Children's Trusts in each local authority
 - well-developed 14-19 partnerships in the four authorities which are already committed to the development of the learner voice in their current plans.
 - existing youth parliaments, cabinets or councils (plus a Youth Board on the Hertfordshire Children's Trust)

- student response and demand data emanating from the continued development of the Connexions service as part of an Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) in each authority
- school and college based student satisfaction surveys which are already well developed
- data provided from surveys of 16-19 providers which the YPLA might commission at regional and sub-regional level.
- feedback captured using online prospectuses.

1.5.2 The “**employer voice**” is accepted as being of critical importance to the plans of the SRG and this will be heard in a number of ways, including:

- employer representation on 14-19 partnerships within each local authority
- existing employer liaison mechanisms which are well established in the FE colleges
- ongoing collective dialogue with FE and sixth form colleges concerning employer requirements
- input from strategic education business link partnerships involving employer organisations such as Chambers of Commerce and Business Link
- feed-in of information from potential future Employment and Skills Boards
- intelligence received from EEDA and other stakeholders
- data provided from surveys of employers which the SFA might commission at regional and sub-regional level
- other contributions from or events organised by the SFA and NAS once they are fully operational and take up a key role in developing relationships with local employers.

1.6. Commissioning and Quality: Accountability

1.6.1. Commissioning undertaken by the SRG joint commissioning team on behalf of all four local authorities will be the result of agreements reached jointly regarding requirements for 16-19 provision.

1.6.2. In order for the SRG to impartially commission high quality provision, it is committed to working with national systems to ensure evidence-based and equitable commissioning decisions are made across schools, FE and other providers.

1.6.2 The Eastern Region LSC has granted local authorities access to (and training on the use of) an LSC 14-19 data tool through an externally accessed web link. A data sharing protocol is in place for this. Information from this tool, together with information supplied by the YPLA and SFA will be used to support commissioning decisions.

1.6.3 Advantage will be gained from using a number of existing key elements as the basis for an effective performance management system, including:

- data regarding learner numbers from the ILR
- Ofsted reports
- achievement data, for example Minimum Levels of Performance data
- existing provider self-assessment systems
- the performance management model encompassed in the Framework for Excellence (FfE) (all four authorities are committed to aligning with national policy developments on FfE rollout in schools) and the Training Quality Standard
- the allocation of a single point of contact by the SRG to develop a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of FE providers and thereby drive up performance.

1.6.4 With access to appropriate provider information (data on learner numbers, achievement against targets, draw-down of funding and quality for previous years, inspection and self-assessment information etc) the joint commissioning team will be able to support the SRG by Identification of any quality issues.

1.6.5 The SRG will then discuss how any quality issues impact on potential negotiations before reaching agreement on what needs to be commissioned (or de-commissioned) as a result from each provider. In order to provide a steer to the lead negotiator, there will also be agreement on the expectations of the other SRG members and any action they feel might be required as a result of quality issues (and whether this could be achieved prior to commissioning so it forms part of contract).

1.6.6 For both FE and apprenticeship provision, there will need to be discussion with the SFA regarding quality issues, clarity around local authority expectations and the impact of providers failing to meet the needs of learners.

1.6.7 At relevant stages in the process, the SRG will ensure that feedback is obtained and this is fed into contracting /decision-making process to inform the allocations for the current year or any future planning.

1.6.8 With this approach, the SRG will, through the planning and commissioning cycle, be in a position to be able to expand strong provision and cease to fund weak provision.

1.6.5 Regular reporting to the Regional Planning Group (RPG) on commissioning or serious quality issues will be built into the process. The RPG will also have a role in aggregating the spending plans of the three SRGs to ensure fit within the regional budget; moderation where there are budgetary constraints to ensure equitable distribution of

funding and to agree clear regional priorities; maintaining the relationship with the YPLA; and maintaining a wider regional perspective, linking in the adult skills and economic agendas.

2. Collaboration and Strategic Commissioning

2.1. Working with FE Providers

2.1.1. Below is a list of the FE and sixth form colleges within this SRG area. Agreement has been reached on which local authorities will undertake negotiations with each provider to ensure that there is one planning and commissioning conversation and one key relationship with each college. This is shown below:

College Name	Current LSC Responsible	Proposed Joint Commissioning Lead Responsible from April 2010
Barnfield College	Bedfordshire & Luton LSC	Luton Borough Council
Bedford College	Bedfordshire & Luton LSC	Bedford Borough Council
Bedfordshire Adult Education Service	Bedfordshire & Luton LSC	Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire local authorities
Dunstable College	Bedfordshire & Luton LSC	Central Bedfordshire Council
Luton Adult Community Learning Service	Bedfordshire & Luton LSC	Luton Borough Council
Luton Sixth Form College	Bedfordshire & Luton LSC	Luton Borough Council
Shuttleworth College	Essex LSC in partnership with Bedfordshire & Luton LSC	Central Bedfordshire in partnership with Essex County Council
Hertford Regional College	Hertfordshire LSC	Hertfordshire County Council
North Hertfordshire College	Hertfordshire LSC	Hertfordshire County Council
Oaklands College	Hertfordshire LSC	Hertfordshire County Council
West Herts College	Hertfordshire LSC	Hertfordshire County Council

NOTE: Providers delivering mainly adult provision above also have small Numbers of young people represented in their learner numbers, so their needs will be considered and any views/concerns fed into the Skills Funding Agency.

2.1.2. It has been agreed that, due to learner flows across the borders, discussions with colleges can only be undertaken as a result of initial discussion within the SRG on the needs of the collective learners. This will ensure that, for example, any conversation that the Hertfordshire Joint Commissioning Lead has with North Herts College takes into account the residents from Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton who also learn there.

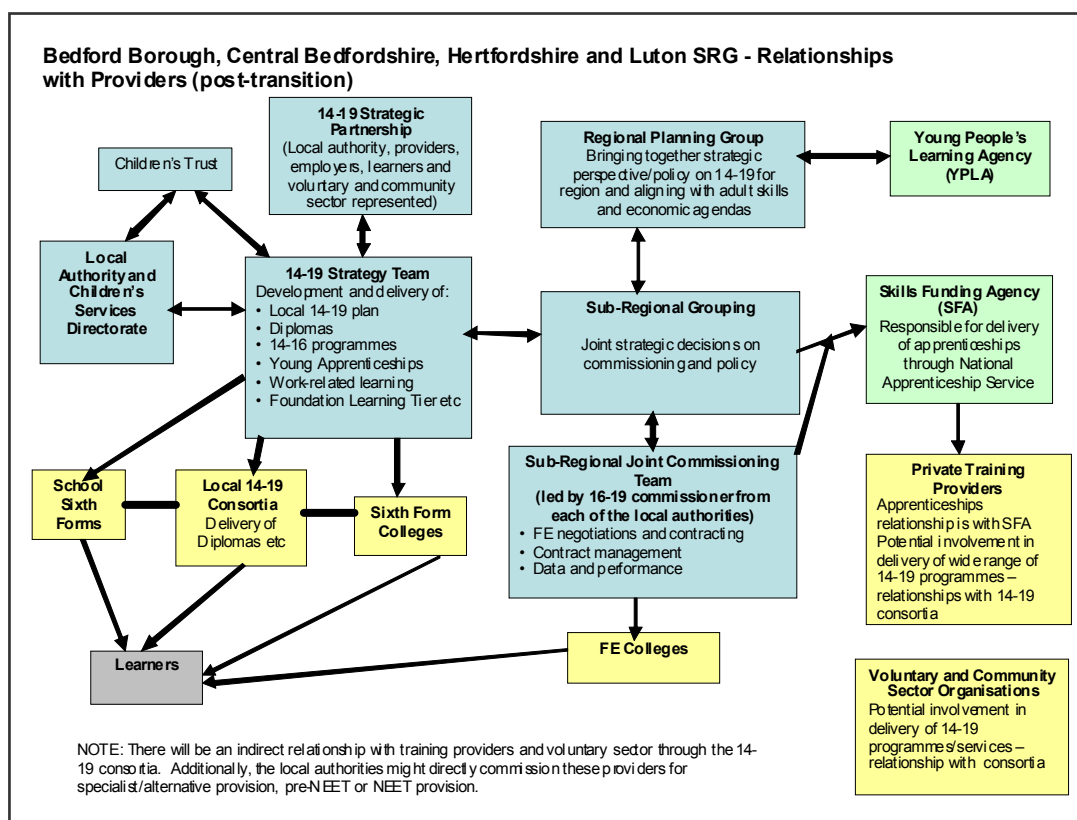
2.1.3. Discussions with sixth form colleges (in this SRG there is one in Luton) will be undertaken by the local authority to which the college will be

responsible, but it is recognised that this provision also must be planned in the context of the wider 14-19 and whole SRG delivery.

- 2.1.4.** Provision at Shuttleworth College is currently planned differently to provision for the other FE colleges in the area. This is because funding currently flows to the college not from the Bedfordshire & Luton LSC, but from Essex LSC via its partner, Writtle College, in Essex. Assuming that the funding and college links continue in this way, the joint commissioning lead for Central Bedfordshire (where the college sits) will need to work in partnership with the Essex County Council FE commissioner to ensure that provision delivered at the college answers the needs of all learners across the SRG area.
- 2.1.5.** The SRG recognises that there is a need to ensure that they are able, both as an SRG and as individual local authorities, to build a culture of collaborative working with colleges and developing relationships that are different to those which have obtained with schools to date. This will require a cultural change to ensure regular contact and a broad understanding of the ways in which colleges work, the breadth of provision (including adult and employer-facing programmes), their community engagement and the underlying curriculum in the context of their larger geographical reach.
- 2.1.6.** In order to work effectively with FE and other providers, the SRG (along with the other SRGs across the region) will develop a regional protocol for joint working with providers. This will ensure clear and transparent processes are in place, will outline the business planning cycle and will establish how key aspects of the relationship will be managed.
- 2.1.7.** The outline of the developing protocol for agreements between local authorities and providers is attached at **APPENDIX 7**.

2.2. Provider Engagement

- 2.2.1.** It is anticipated that local authority and SRG relationships with providers will work as shown in the diagram below. The solid lines reflect a direct commissioning relationship.



A full-page version of this diagram is available in **APPENDIX 8**.

2.2.2. Local authorities will have a direct commissioning relationship with:

- Schools
- 14-19 Consortia
- NEET and pre-NEET/alternative provision
- Sixth Form Colleges
- FE Colleges (through sub-regional grouping arrangements)
- The Skills Funding Agency / National Apprenticeship Service
- Young People's Learning Agency

2.2.3. Private training providers are likely to have a direct relationship with:

- The Skills Funding Agency for delivery of apprenticeships and other employer-responsive provision
- Local 14-19 Consortia partners for the delivery of 14-19 programmes such as Young Apprenticeships, Diplomas
- ESF Co-financing agency for delivery of ESF programmes (this might be either the YPLA, SFA or Local Authorities in the future).
- Local authorities for the delivery of pre-NEET, NEET or alternative provision or support services.

- 2.2.4.** It should be noted here, that there is currently no clarity on the commissioning of provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and guidance is awaited on this.
- 2.2.5.** The SRG is keen to develop effective relationships with providers as soon as possible and work is already underway (in partnership with local LSC teams) to do so in readiness for taking over the commissioning role in 2010 and effect a smooth transition. Local authority key staff are meeting regularly with FE colleges, take advantage of stakeholder and provider briefing opportunities and there is work underway to develop some further provider familiarisation opportunities.
- 2.2.6.** FE colleges and work-based learning providers are already represented on the 14-19 strategic partnerships in each of the local authorities and the SRG development has been discussed in this forum. It should be noted here that local authorities will be reviewing the role of 14-19 partnerships in the light of the whole 14-19 agenda and SRG developments to ensure that they are appropriately structured to reflect their dual commissioning and stakeholder engagement roles.
- 2.2.7.** Discussion regarding the development of the SRG has already taken place with FE providers via local FE forum routes as well as with individual colleges, and this is programmed to continue.
- 2.2.8.** Additionally, the SRG will arrange an annual briefing with providers in all sectors (FE colleges, sixth form colleges, school sixth forms, private providers and voluntary sector organisations) to consult on matters such as annual commissioning priorities, funding trends, quality issues, participation, etc.
- 2.2.9.** The local authorities comprising the SRG, in conjunction with the LSC, commenced tracking of the commissioning and allocations process with FE providers in December 2008. Due to time constraints, there was no opportunity for local authorities to attend the FE negotiation meetings, but there has been engagement at RPG level in following the moderation and allocations process. There has also been some local authority and LSC joint working on Challenge and Support with regard to schools sixth forms, plus discussions around the sixth form funding allocations.
- 2.2.10.** Dialogue with FE providers is also being facilitated through the Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region working with the Programme Manager and the Regional Forum in order to ensure effective regional communication of progress towards transition.

2.3. Employer Engagement

2.3.1 Engagement with employers is to be effected through a variety of channels, including:

- 14-19 education plans and employer representation on 14-19 strategic planning groups
- employer involvement in the Diploma and other curriculum development processes
- continuation of the existing LSC employer forums
- those organisations and mechanisms set out above under “employer voice” – see Section 1.5.2.

2.4. Engagement with Other Stakeholders

2.4.1 The SRG will continue to develop existing links with other stakeholders, including EEDA, GO East, (both are represented on the Regional Forum) and National Health Service (NHS) trusts (locally embedded through Children’s Trusts).

2.4.2 EEDA is part of the Regional Planning Group and was engaged in the SRG development process at the early stage where travel to learn patterns were used to identify the necessary groupings. They have been consulted with regard to establishing clear and effective routes for ensuring that intelligence relating to the economic and adult skills agenda is appropriately embedded in local authority planning at an early stage, therefore being embedded within SRG work. EEDA will be involved in reviewing the development of SRG plans across the region prior to the submission of these Stage 2 proposals to DCSF.

2.4.3 As indicated above, FE Colleges and 14-19 partnerships and planning groups have been involved in discussions on this Stage 2 SRG submission.

2.4.4 Although the SRG would wish to establish a route for input from sector skills councils (SSCs), this is something that is not possible currently on a sub-regional basis. Nationally, sector skills councils are at varying stages of development and re-organisation and are therefore unable to actively engage at this level currently. Additionally, many have no regional presence. SSC engagement will be pursued as SRGs and the RPG develop relationships with the SFA, which is likely to be the main route to the SSCs. Additionally, in partnership with the LSC, the Regional Programme Manager for the Transition will be meeting with some SCCs as opportunities arise over the next few months in order to feed information into the regional work plan and develop links.

2.5. Collaborative Work

2.5.1. The following collaborative work is already underway in this sub-regional grouping on the 14-19 reform agenda:

- The 14-19 strategy managers from the four local authorities (the two new unitary authorities of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire are operating one joint 14-19 team currently) already meet on a regular basis to ensure coherent planning across the sub-region.
- The former Bedfordshire County Council and Luton have an arrangement (since April 2008) to share backroom functions for Connexions. This ensured stability at a time of change, but Luton is developing its own capacity to fulfil this function from April 2009. There will be clear links between staff fulfilling these functions in-house and the SRG joint commissioning team as required.
- Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton have a joint prospectus and there has been discussion about Hertfordshire aligning their prospectus. More information on this can be found in Section 5.4.
- Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton also have a joint common application process (CAP) project which is mentioned in Section 5.5.
- There is collaboration between all four local authorities on 14-16 provision for pre-NEET.
- The four local authorities are working jointly with the providers delivering services for 16-19 NEET learners.
- The 14-19 strategy managers from all four authorities are working with a range of Diploma networks across the sub-region and region.
- The 14-19 partnerships in each local are collaborations of a range of providers and stakeholders working together to provide leadership, set the priorities for 14-19 (and, in the case of Campus Luton, for 11-19) and implement 14-19 reform. The priorities are driven by the national and local agendas and include NEET reduction, the national and local learner entitlement, raising of the participation age, inclusion and raising achievement.

2.5.2. Collaborative working right across the SRG is limited currently. However, in preparing to take on joint commissioning responsibilities, the SRG has identified priorities for collaborative working that will enable it to meet the priorities for Raising the Participation Age in the sub-region. These are detailed in section 4.1.

2.6. Delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance

- 2.6.1.** In a demand-led system, where funding follows the learner, the choices young people make will be crucial in creating the shape of the system. High quality and consistently impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) is also acknowledged to be key factor in learner participation, persistence and progression.
- 2.6.2.** Following the 2008 Progress Checks, IAG was identified as a key improvement area across the region as a whole. All of the local authorities within this SRG are committed to the achievement of national IAG quality standards for local authority Connexions/IYSS services and all are actively pursuing this through a range of audits.
- 2.6.3.** Local authority Connexions/IYSS data services will inform local demand, which will link to 14-19 strategic partnerships through local arrangements. This in turn will inform each authority's 14-19 commissioning plan and these will be aggregated into the overall SRG commissioning plan.
- 2.6.4.** The current shared 14-19 Partnership that covers Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire has a Strategy Group each for IAG, NEET and LLDD. These are shown on the shared service 14-19 Partnership diagram in Section 1.3 and **APPENDIX 6a**. These Strategy Groups are responsible for ensuring that the needs of young people are being met.
- 2.6.5.** In Hertfordshire, connexions services are provided through an integrated Youth Connexions Service (YCH). This brings together IAG, targeted youth support, positive activities and volunteering into a coherent package of support for young people. There is a youth connexions centre and linked YCH Personal Adviser in every secondary school and FE College. In addition, extensive access to web-based information and advice is available through Connexions Direct, Channel Mogo and Herts Choices.
- 2.6.6.** The provision of IAG is underpinned by the Hertfordshire IAG Protocol, which sets out the framework for provision and how Youth Connexions and all secondary schools, FE colleges and other learning providers work together to ensure impartial and responsive IAG. This is underpinned by the Youth Connexions IAG Quality Award. The seven Strategic Area Partnership Groups (SAPGs) provide the infrastructure for much of the continuing development of IAG. All SAPGs have a sub group developing its IAG strategy and overseeing delivery. Each sub group has a linked Team Leader, CEG Consultant and Information Adviser from Youth Connexions who collectively ensure access to impartial guidance, support event planning and ensure key IAG intelligence is circulated to education establishments. SAPG planning is supported by the provision of regular detailed data on NEET. The annual activity survey which highlights destination data is a key tool used by SAPGs to support their planning processes.

- 2.6.7.** Campus Luton recognises the importance of IAG to achieving 14-19 reform and has identified it as a priority for further development in 2008/09. The local authority believes that the delivery of IAG is best met through collaboration. In Luton, the responsibility for the delivery of IAG is co-ordinated through the 14-19 Team (Campus Luton) and the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS). A CEG adviser is being recruited to the 14-19 team to work with providers to ensure they meet the quality standards in this aspect of IAG. One school and the Sixth Form College have the Investor in Careers Quality Kite mark for careers education and every young person in Luton has access to 'My Progress File' and 'Fast Tomato'.
- 2.6.8.** Luton Borough Council successfully took the Connexions Service in-house on 1st April 2008, supporting the aim of joined up approaches to helping young people. Luton has a strong NEET Strategy group which has a whole range of professionals on it from the statutory and voluntary sector and receives updates on September Guarantee, Schools Engagement Project and NEET. Integrated Youth Support will be part of a fully integrated Children's Service which will be delivered through a 'neighbourhood model from April 2009. IAG will inform provision planning in gaining feedback from learners through direct engagement with them and via analysing the data that will be available through the CAP.

2.7. Current Joint Commissioning

- 2.7.1** The four authorities are each involved in a number of joint commissioning arrangements with other bodies, many of which are co-ordinated and agreed through Children's Trust arrangements and this experience has been used to develop the SRG's approach to this new 16-19 commissioning responsibility. Following a survey of current joint commissioning work underway (for example with Health within Children's Trusts) within each of the four local authorities, the following examples were identified:
- 2.7.1.1.** All of the authorities have 14-19 posts that are joint-funded by the individual authorities and the LSC currently. This partnership has ensured a rapid acceleration in developing a strategy for 14-19 and moving the 14-19 Reform Agenda forward. The teams are now building capacity & extending expertise in order to absorb the new 16-19 responsibilities for planning and commissioning process at both local authority and SRG level when this funding ceases in 2010.
- 2.7.2.** Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire have established a joint commissioning arrangement for their Children's Trust work and this is described fully in **APPENDIX 6b**.

- 2.7.3. ER5 is a sub regional arrangement where 5 authorities (Hertfordshire, Essex, Southend, Thurrock and Norfolk) jointly host a regional monitoring officer and have worked together to commission independent fostering services. This work has resulted in a higher quality of service and better value for money.
- 2.7.4. Hertfordshire is the lead authority in the Eastern Region for a DCSF joint commissioning pilot, and manages the 'matching engine' of residential providers on behalf of 40+ local authorities.
- 2.7.5. Hertfordshire and Luton are currently involved in forward a project to secure provision for looked after children with challenging behaviour.
- 2.7.6. Hertfordshire will have a joint contract with health for the provision of Homestart services with effect from 1st April 2009, where the Children, Schools and Families Directorate will be the lead commissioner. They are also working with health services on the provision of speech and language services.
- 2.7.7. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is a jointly commissioned service in Hertfordshire.
- 2.7.8. In Luton, the Change4ChildrenUnit is a joint commissioning team shared by NHS Luton and the Children and Learning Department in Luton Borough Council, which has an overall remit to develop Children's Trust arrangements e.g. CYPP, JSNA etc. This work commenced in 2007 and has pooled and aligned budgets. It has developed joint plans and strategies in key areas such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), disability and child health. This will support the development of a commissioning approach across the whole Children's Trust and has developed the understanding of a joint commissioning approach more widely across the LA children's services. There will be clear links to the new 16-19 responsibilities as they are embedded within the local authority.
- 2.7.9. The East of England Region has recently engaged in a programme to develop and support commissioning for Children's Trusts and that work will be referenced in the development of the SRGs to ensure that 16-19 commissioning is consistent with the commissioning approach of the Children's Trusts.

2.8. Cross-Border Planning

- 2.8.1 In 2007/2008 a total of around 3,000 learners travelled outside of their own authority, but within the SRG borders. There was a net inflow of learners to the SRG from within the region of approximately 100 learners (950 imports and 850 exports). There was a net export of learners from the SRG to other areas outside the region of approximately 280 learners (600 imports and 940 exports).

- 2.8.2** An area that has been identified as particularly requiring focused cross-border discussion is the flow of learners from London into Hertfordshire and the flow across the border into and out of Milton Keynes to and from Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.
- 2.8.3** Local authorities have an obligation to plan appropriate provision to meet the needs of all of their residents (and to take into account Government funding priorities), but it is recognised that not all residents will choose or be able to access appropriate learning within the borders of the authority. It is therefore essential that local authorities, who are planning based on residents, but funding institutions, are prepared to hold dialogue with authorities across their borders to ensure that the voice of their learners is heard within the institutions where they learn.
- 2.8.4** A region-wide protocol will be developed by the Regional Planning Group for the Eastern Region for undertaking planning discussions across SRGs and with out-of-region authorities. But it is also understood that DCSF is developing national guidance on this cross-border planning issue and that is awaited before arrangements can be finalised.
- 2.8.5** The SRG will use the transition year to gain a good understanding of the flow of learners across the borders and to start discussions with neighbouring areas.
- 2.8.6** For the present however, the approach agreed within this SRG is as follows:
- 2.8.7** Local Authorities will review data and have discussions with institutions in their area to:
- review performance for the year
 - review travel to learn patterns (both historic and projected) and the extent of learners from outside the area
 - identify areas of study for imported learners
 - review projections for the following year
 - ascertain a full picture of quality of provision, taking account of recent inspection reports, Framework for Excellence, self-assessment reports and other evidence based intelligence
 - identify reasons why some learners' needs are not being met 'in area'.
- 2.8.8.** Local authorities will identify:
- historic travel to learn patterns and the extent of learners studying outside the area from YPLA data
 - the projected destination of learners at the end of Year 11 from discussions with schools and from Connexions data.
 - the financial implications of this movement

2.8.9. Local authorities will establish overall picture of learners crossing borders to institutions:

- within the SRG
- within the region
- outside the region.

2.8.10. Local authorities will identify:

- major sources of imported learners
- reasons why learners are crossing borders, for example availability of curriculum, quality, geography, availability of transport.
- risks, barriers, areas of concern.

2.8.11. The above will inform the local area statement of need, the 14-19 education plan and will be aggregated for SRG discussions and the resulting sub-regional commissioning plan.

2.8.12. It is acknowledged that the needs of all residents cannot necessarily be met within a local authority border for many good reasons, such as local transport and travel routes, proximity of learners to out of area provision etc and it is not possible, particularly for small unitary authorities to provide all possible learning options within their own borders.

2.8.13. The sub-regional grouping, supported by the joint commissioning team, will gain an understanding of the overall position of learner imports and exports between authorities within the SRG and within the region.

2.8.14. For imports and exports of learners within the SRG, the four local authorities will:

- consider reasons for the movement of learners
- review the extent of overlap of provision between institutions
- take into account the quality of provision and overall performance of institutions.

2.8.15. For imports and exports of learners within the region, the SRG will consult with other SRGs in the region to:

- discuss reasons for learner movements and why demand is not being met within the SRG
- determine the quality of provision that learners are travelling for
- identify potential opportunities to retain learners in the SRG.

2.8.16. For imports and exports of learners outside the region, the SRG will:

- identify the principal authorities involved with the cross-border movements
- open dialogues with the relevant SRGs concerning reasons for movements, likely volume of movements and transport links
- discuss with the relevant SRGs the type and quality of provision being offered in 'competing' institutions in the respective SRGs.

2.8.17. The above will inform the overall commissioning plan of the SRG and subsequent discussions with institutions concerning the future year's curriculum offer. There may also be scope for planning joint provision across borders to achieve joint targets such NEET prevention.

2.8.18. The cross-border negotiations will be led by the authority bordering the area, supported by the joint commissioning team. SRG plans will be aggregated at Regional Planning Group level so that an overview of the planning and any cross-border issues can be maintained and this group will have a moderation role.

3. Resources and Capacity

3.1. Staffing Needs

- 3.1.1** The SRG will take account of DCSF guidance (which is yet to be received) regarding the proposed level of staffing that local authorities and SRGs might need to support 16-19 commissioning (with an acknowledgement that exact roles and numbers would need to vary according to how many learners and providers local authorities/SRGs are responsible for).
- 3.1.2** Local authorities are putting plans in place to review their internal structures to ensure the most appropriate fit of these new responsibilities within current structures, to ensure integration with 14-19 work and Integrated Youth Support Services and to maintain continuity and oversight of 16-19 commissioning.
- 3.1.3** The structure of 14-19 management will need review because currently, each local authority in the sub-region has 14-19 posts that are funded through LSC grants. This funding comes to an end in the next year, so local authorities need to find a way of sustaining 14-19 strategy teams whilst taking on these new responsibilities.
- 3.1.4** A large factor in determining final staffing requirements for the local authorities/SRG will be the potential for the transfer of key staff from the local LSC offices.
- 3.1.5** The precise numbers of staff required to meet the new responsibilities will become clearer when the DCSF has published further details of the structures, resources and functions of the local authority, YPLA, SFA and NAS as well as providing a further indication of resources available to local authorities.
- 3.1.6** The local authorities and SRG recognise that, overall, there will need to be staff who can undertake the following functions:
- maintain existing 14-19 functions
 - delivering a strategic role at SRG and regional planning level and ensuring regional consistency and the link to regional adult skills and economic agendas
 - agreeing, monitoring and managing targets
 - negotiating with providers
 - aggregating, reviewing and analysing data from various sources to form a sub-regional picture to support the planning, decision making and performance management processes
 - providing technical expertise on demand-led funding
 - leading discussions with YPLA on funding and data received
 - managing the relationship with SFA/National Apprenticeships Service (NAS) on apprenticeships and links to the adult agenda

- involvement in moderation at SRG level
- development of Local Area Statement of Need (linked to local 14-19 planning) and SRG aggregated 16-19 commissioning arrangements
- data entry and arrangements to support this
- undertaking cross-border planning and discussions
- ensuring that contracting arrangements are monitored and managed
- ensuring that provision goes through local procurement processes if needed.
- ensuring contracting procedures are adhered to and that providers have contract and will get paid.
- building effective relationships with providers
- overall performance management
- management of any European Social Fund contracts for the 14-19 cohort.
- management of LLDD contracts

Some of this staffing will be at a local level, some may be at SRG level and some functions might even be undertaken at a regional level.

3.1.7 Further appraisal of staffing requirements and a skills audit of existing staff will be carried out as soon as possible when information is available on numbers of staff likely to transfer from LSCs into local authority roles. This will help to determine how jobs might be structured and to identify any knowledge and skills gaps in order to plan staff development. **APPENDIX 9** contains a skills audit template that will be used for this work.

3.1.8 In addition to auditing skills and knowledge around the new responsibilities, the SRGs and individual local authorities acknowledge the need to plan effective induction programmes for staff transferring across from the LSC in order to ensure that they are able to operate effectively in this different cultural environment. Early informal sessions are planned, working with the local LSCs, to give LSC employees a flavour of opportunities in local authorities and ensure they are kept up-to-date with SRG developments and the 14-19 agenda work.

3.1.9 There have been early discussions in each authority within the Children's Services Management Team and with HR leads about these changes. Project plans and capacity are being developed to ensure ability to manage the transfer-in of LSC staff. We await the national blueprint and information on TUPE-like arrangements to proceed.

3.1.10 Additionally, there are on-going discussions within the SRG and Regional Planning Group about the potential for some regional roles/functions to support all SRGs and ensure a regional consistency in the long term.

3.2. Data-Sharing

- 3.2.1** The East of England LSC data team has developed a 14-19 data tool which local authority key staff are able to use through an externally accessed web link. A data sharing protocol is in place for this. This site can may also be used to share other relevant transition documents in the future.
- 3.2.2** Through this tool, the local authorities have access to LSC data on travel to learn patterns, recruitment patterns, funding etc. Further development work is planned to expand the tool to include success rate data, to cut data for each local authority area and so on.
- 3.2.3** The local authorities intend to adopt the LSC's data sharing protocols as a basis for sharing data.
- 3.2.4** The SRG accepts and welcomes the DCSF commitment to the YPLA providing a strategic analysis service which will supply consistent data to support local authorities in meeting their commissioning duties.
- 3.2.5** Data aggregation, analysis and management will be undertaken by the SRG joint commissioning team in order to support the planning and commissioning decisions made by the individual local authorities and the SRG.
- 3.2.6** As part of the regional transition programme, consultancy work was been commissioned to review the data currently available in order to establish whether local authorities and SRGs will have access to sufficient supply and demand data to underpin 14-19 planning. This has identified the need to gather information such as: prior allocations and delivery data and ILR data from the YLPA; school sixth form data; travel to learn data; Connexions data; and economic and social data (with reference to overall regional and local economic strategies) for this planning.
- 3.2.7** The local authorities and SRGs will need to establish a process for collecting and analysing all of the relevant information to aid the planning process at an early stage in 14-19 planning. This will need to take into account the data that will be made available by the YPLA, SFA and EEDA as the transition planning moves forward
- 3.2.8** Data sharing protocols will be put in place to facilitate this aggregation of data between local authorities and between agencies.

3.3. Sharing Practice

- 3.3.1** Good practice is shared freely between local authorities and the LSC through the Regional Forum, a Regional LA/LSC 14-19 Transitional

Planning Group (attended by 14-19 strategy managers during the transition period) and the SRGs.

- 3.3.2** The Regional Programme Manager for the Transition is also playing a key role during the transition period in ensuring that information and ideas are shared between SRGs and that regional consistency is achieved.
- 3.3.3** GO East co-ordinates a quarterly 14-19 Forum which contributes to the sharing of good practice across the region.
- 3.3.4** As indicated above, the SRG is working with the LSC local teams to establish practice-sharing through the tracking year and this involved regular meetings of key staff, identifying opportunities for work shadowing and involvement in FE negotiations, plus skills development. Additionally, planning is currently underway on how local authority involvement in the commissioning will escalate during the transition year (2009/10).
- 3.3.5** The Regional Programme Manager is working with GO East on planning an event to share practice and further develop 14-19 links to the Integrated Youth Support Services structures – probably in May 2009.
- 3.3.6** Future practice-sharing routes/groups will depend on the structures within local authorities and SRGs and the future co-ordination of the Regional Forum.

3.4. Readiness to Operate Model B

- 3.3.7** The SRG has agreed its clear intention to operate Model B: to take responsibility for the planning and commissioning of provision from FE colleges (as opposed to YPLA undertaking this role).
- 3.3.8** The SRG has moved towards readiness to operate Model B through the achievement of a number of milestones, including:
- member and lead officer endorsement of Model B.
 - member and lead officer endorsement of the joint commissioning model set out above.
 - engagement of key people from each local authority to undertake development of regional and sub-regional structures.
 - the appointment of a Regional Programme Manager from November 2008 to April 2010 to support the transition.
 - funding identified to support early transition work.
 - detailed work commissioned on the requirements of Model B and to support the development of the Stage 2 submissions.
 - shadowing arrangements in place with LSC.

- a Regional Transition Programme Work Plan agreed through to September 2010.
- activity Plan agreed for local authorities during transition.
- 16-19 Transition Programme Risk Register in place.
- 16-19 Transition Programme Issues Log in place.
- a Communications Strategy established for 16-19 transition in the East of England.
- relationships established and being further developed with FE colleges and other providers.
- capacity issues identified and being addressed.
- work underway with stakeholders to identify routes to connect the economic and adult skills agendas to 14-19 planning.

4. Policy and Planning

4.1. Delivering 14-19 Reforms

4.1.1. The SRG has discussed the need to work collaboratively in order to deliver the 14-19 Reform Agenda more effectively and provide better services to all learners across the sub-region. The following key priorities have been agreed across the sub-region.

1. Ensure that the sub-regional grouping has a programme in place for planning and expanding provision to deliver the entitlement for young people. This must recognise the changing demand in learner numbers and also in accessibility, especially in rural areas and operate in the context of the Raising the Participation Agenda and the current recession.
2. Develop innovative provision to target and reduce the incidence of NEET, with a focus on early interventions and effective 14-16 programmes to increase the achievement and job-readiness of learners.
3. Ensure a comprehensive offer for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities to age 25, focusing particularly on increasing the outcomes for these learners at key transition stages, subject to clarifying the commissioning responsibilities of local authorities and SRGs.
4. Develop appropriate FLT provision to support learner progression to Level 2 and beyond.
5. Provide a broad range of 14-16 learning opportunities to support post-16 engagement and progression, linked to the development of effective IAG, the identification of clear progression routes for learners and further joint developments on prospectuses and common application processes.
6. Share practice on 14-19 planning and delivery in order to develop a more co-ordinated sub-regional approach to benefit learners.
7. Improve the quality of provision and overall success rates across the area in order to improve outcomes for all learners, including those most vulnerable.
8. Develop a coherent sub-regional capital strategy that supports the planning of provision for 14-19 learners across all four authorities.
9. Increase the take-up of and develop the market for apprenticeships through effective working with the National Apprenticeship Service, linked to the delivery of appropriate IAG in schools.
10. Increase the focus on key sectors to respond to priority areas identified in the Education Plan (especially with reference to the Diplomas agenda) and highlighted by the East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership (EESCP) in order

to respond effectively to the requirements of the adult skills and economic agendas.

- 4.1.2. Each local authority has a 14-19 education plan and there is a commitment to refreshing these in the light of developing structures in SRGs, Children's Trust developments, 16-19 transition plans and the need to work more closely together across the area, linking in wider services such as economic development, youth services etc.
- 4.1.3. The four local authorities are now formalising arrangements for the 14-19 strategy leads to meet regularly to ensure cohesive development of plans and responses to the priorities identified.
- 4.1.3. These plans will be linked into the 16-19 allocations business cycle and all local authorities are agreed that it is essential that 16-19 commissioning becomes properly embedded within the whole 14-19 agenda. Currently, a separate Local Authority Statement of Need is developed to identify the priorities for 16-19 commissioning but, in time, 16-19 planning will be subsumed into overall 14-19 planning instead of being seen as a separate, new entity and the 14-19 Education Plan will cover all aspects of provision for young people.
- 4.1.4. Each local authority already has a 14-19 strategic partnership that supports the planning of 14-19 reform work. These are at varying stages of maturity, but in all cases, membership is composed of a broad range of representatives from schools, FE colleges, work-based learning providers, the voluntary and community sector (where applicable) and from business/employers. Some already have active learner representation or are in the process of capturing learner voice.
- 4.1.5. Additionally, local authority 14-19 leads have been working together across the region to develop a shared approach to increasing the quality of 14-19 provision across all areas of the Reform Agenda. A Quality Framework is in development and the accompanying Quality Statement, which highlights the planned outcomes, can be found in **APPENDIX 10**. This is a work in progress and will develop further in the context of future changes to Ofsted inspections as they will relate to partnerships etc.
- 4.1.6. The local authority transition planning includes work to assess how 14-19, school improvement service and IYSS structures can be linked to provide a more effective and better co-ordinated service for learners.
- 4.1.7. With this SRG being composed of one large county authority and three smaller unitary authorities who have significant learner flow between them, there is a common concern about the development and cost of transportation services to support the delivery of a wide 14-19 curriculum to learners. Advantage will be gained from developing a shared approach to this issue across the four authorities.

- 4.1.8.** A DCSF funded 'Rural 14-19 Transport Strategy' is being put in place that covers Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. Currently over 1,000 Key Stage 4 pupils are accessing collaboratively delivered provision supported by the transport arrangements agreed through the 14-19 Partnership. Campus Luton is part of Luton Borough Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy development and they have developed collaborative arrangements to minimise transport difficulties. Hertfordshire is currently undertaking work to review its transport strategy.
- 4.1.9.** Local authorities and LSC teams are beginning to share information to link Building Schools for the Future planning with the regional LSC FE Capital Buildings Programme to ensure that there is a whole-area approach to capital investment projects.

5. Raising Participation and Attainment

LSC data shows the following picture for young people resident in the local authorities within the sub-region:

	Hertfordsh'r	Bedfordsh'r	Luton	National
Participation at age 17 (end 2005)	83%	80.7%	78.2%	
Level 2 at 19 (2006/7)	79.4%	71.7%	67.3%	73.9%
Level 3 at 19 (2006/7)	58.1%	49.4%	41.7%	48%
NEET (Nov 2008 to Jan 2009 averages)	5%	5.8%	7.3%	6.7%
FE & Sixth Form College Learners (2007-8)	10,816	5,634	5,036	
FE Funding (2007/8)	£46,717,016	£17,782,641	£21,213,963	
Apprenticeship Learners (2007/8)	1,513	2,865	585	
Apprenticeship Funding (2007/8)	£6,393,638	£12,520,644	£2,471,126	
School Sixth Form Learners (2007/8)	13,318	4,691	422	
School Sixth Form Funding (2007/8) *	70,089,085	£23,791,110		
E2E Learners (2007/8)	592	342	263	

NOTES: * Bedfordshire and Luton allocations for schools were not separated in allocations records for 2007/8. Data has not yet been split into Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

5.1. Supply and Demand

- 5.1.1.** The SRG is agreed on the need to further develop individual local authority 14-19 planning to include comprehensive information on the supply of and demand for all types and levels of learning within the area. The addition of this information will ensure that curriculum development reflects not only the choices and preferences of learners, but also the needs of employers and the demands of the local labour market.
- 5.1.2.** With local authority priorities then aggregated at a sub-regional and regional level, this will ensure that future commissioning decisions can be evidence-based.
- 5.1.3.** As part of the regional transition programme, consultancy work was commissioned to review the data currently available in order to establish whether local authorities and SRGs will have access to sufficient supply and demand data to underpin 14-19 planning. This has identified a need to gather information such as: prior allocations and delivery data and ILR data from the YLPA; school sixth form data;

travel to learn data; Connexions data; and economic and social data (with reference to overall regional and local economic strategies) for this planning.

- 5.1.4.** The local authorities and SRG (linked to current Regional Planning Group discussions about potential regional functions) will need to establish a process for collecting and analysing all of the relevant information to aid the planning process at an early stage in 14-19 planning. This will need to take into account the data that will be made available by the YPLA, SFA and EEDA as the transition work moves forward.
- 5.1.5.** The SRG will also be analysing data on FE college delivery and will be able to determine how far this addresses the priorities identified in the area. Any issues around this will be discussed with colleges during the planning process in order to agree the plans for the coming year.
- 5.1.6.** Local authority joint commissioning teams will need to gain an understanding of the curriculum offer of FE colleges and will need to view this in context with the overall delivery for learners in the area.
- 5.1.7.** Data sharing protocols will be put in place to facilitate this aggregation of data between local authorities and between agencies.

5.2. Developing Shared Knowledge

- 5.2.1.** Local authorities will aim to develop shared knowledge of 14-19 policy areas including linked CYP work and outcomes to ensure that commissioning decisions on priorities reflect this follow through and consistency across the SRG.
- 5.2.2.** It has been agreed that, although the main SRG purpose is the commissioning of FE provision, this can only be done effectively if there is a collective view of the commissioning across all 16-19 areas. This will ensure that the needs of all learners can be addressed fully.
- 5.2.3.** The development of a shared business cycle and shared approaches to commissioning across the region and within the SRG will provide a co-ordinated and consistent approach for all providers and good standards of practice.
- 5.2.3.** The aggregation of data at SRG level will inform the wider 14-19 planning and the needs around developing transition to adult services.
- 5.2.4.** There are synergies between the Children's and Young People's Plans of each authority that need to be further explored over the coming months. Work is currently being undertaken via the Regional Children's Service Programme Board to map good practice across the region and identify key areas for future development in Children's Services. There

is also regional work going on to inform commissioning practice. The outcomes of this work will be fed into SRG operation.

5.3. Commissioning for Vulnerable Groups

- 5.3.1.** The SRG is committed to the principle that it is essential that services for vulnerable learners are not compromised during the transition.
- 5.3.2.** Work has begun with the LSC regionally to gain an understanding of how provision is currently structured and commissioned for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD), the volumes, costs and services this comprises.
- 5.3.3.** The next step will be for each of the local authorities in the region to ensure that key staff involved in services for vulnerable learners attend a workshop being organised by the regional LSC.
- 5.3.4.** Work will need to commence regionally between LSC and local authority staff, to map LSC and local authority provision, to determine where there is overlap or gaps in the service and to identify risks for the transition. Plans can then be developed to effectively manage the transition and merging of responsibilities (where appropriate), ensuring links to the local authority adult social care systems and to developing health partnerships and Children's Trust work.
- 5.3.5.** There is just one Young Offender Institution (YOI) in the region, sited on the Suffolk coast. The LSC will be involving Suffolk County Council in the procurement exercise that is currently underway to commission education and training provision within the facility. This commissioning will be undertaken on behalf of the region as this is the main custody facility for young offenders across the region.
- 5.3.6.** The role of the YPLA in the commissioning of LLDD and offender provision is still unclear, so further guidance is awaited on this.

In addition to this, local authorities have been working closely with the LSC and other partners in readiness for taking over this responsibility:

- 5.3.7.** Luton has been working with the LSC to develop innovative, specialist and co-ordinated packages of learning for learners with learning difficulties (LLDD) aged 16-26 and have established a Placement Panel. The Panel makes funding decisions currently, but this may well be subsumed into the 16-19 joint commissioning work in Luton.
- 5.3.8.** Campus Luton and Luton Borough Council have also been working with Woodlands Schools and Barnfield College to improve transitions for LLDD learners from pre- to post-16 provision. This has provided increased support for learners, especially those changing institutions. Following the transition of 16-19 responsibilities, the transition workers

undertaking this role could inform and support a commissioning process post-16 including in areas such as quality assurance and monitoring.

- 5.3.9.** Additionally, Luton has been working with the LSC to undertake research into the current and future post-16 needs of LLDD in order to support the transition from pre- to post-16 services.

5.4. Area-Wide Prospectus

- 5.4.1.** The **Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton** joint 14-19 online area prospectus www.forward-together.org has been up and running since July 2007. Forwardtogether provides information on school, college and work-based learning providers' opportunities across the three authorities. The site is provided by VIS Communications and is currently managed on behalf of the three partners by the University of Bedfordshire. To date, the University has visited every school and college in the area to promote the site, collected and analysed useful market research on provider views, and written a marketing and advertising plan for the prospectus for the next two years.

- 5.4.2.** A communication plan in respect of the Forward-together website is being rolled out in the Spring/Summer term 2009, aimed at all stakeholders including students and parents. Following a Luton evaluation of the system carried out by students, in summer term 2008, the system underwent an upgrade to enhance usability, and a training programme is underway for all providers in the use of the updated system. This training is being carried out by Connexions.

- 5.4.3.** The Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire prospectus has 46 different providers listed including all FE colleges, Secondary schools, Independent schools, Special schools and a large proportion of the Approved local training providers. There are 937 learning opportunities for post 16 students and 578 opportunities for 14-16 year olds including four diplomas.

- 5.4.4.** All Luton schools and Colleges are represented on the site, and a large proportion of work based learning providers operating in the area. There are currently 430 post 16 opportunities listed and 368 14-16 opportunities which include 3 Diplomas and over 20 collaborative courses.

- 5.4.5.** Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire have secured funding from the LSC to purchase Individual Learning Plan (ILP) software and to run a pilot with a small number of schools from September 2009. This will ensure that the two authorities are on track to meet the government's requirement to have an integrated ILP within the Prospectus by September 2010.

- 5.4.6.** Campus Luton has funded 'My Progress File' ILP for all schools in Luton. This system is currently being implemented and Luton are members of the VIS LAP/CAP User group which is a national group designed to share best practice among customers of the VIS product.
- 5.4.7.** An evaluation of the updated system will be carried out in line with the evaluation of the CAP Pilot.
- 5.4.8.** The **Hertfordshire** on-line prospectus, <http://www.hertschoices.org.uk/>, launched in February 2008, provides information on all of the courses and programmes offered within Hertfordshire by 129 different schools, colleges, training providers and providers of alternative education, plus information on progression routes. Young people are able to make informed choices about options that are available to them and to progress along the right learning pathways.
- 5.4.9.** There are currently 8,877 courses listed on the website which includes all 5 Diplomas and 6 Young Apprenticeship courses. Information can be accessed by course, by level including next steps, by provider and by location. Links to useful websites are also available and the site includes information on different types of qualifications and how they relate to each other, plus information on providers includes performance data at KS4 and post-16 and inspection reports as appropriate.
- 5.4.10.** The prospectus is an integral part of the available information, advice and guidance (IAG) provision for young people. The prospectus is signposted at every parent evening/options evening, CEG programmes, by PAs, web sites, all Youth Connexions publications (including regional) and information is sent out to every student when they receive their KS4 examination results.
- 5.4.11.** hertschoices was linked to Fast Tomato, the Aim Higher-funded careers matching tool, but following young people analysis in spring 2008 by Youth Connexions, Kudos Online made by the software developer CASCAID, is now the preferred Online-matching tool. The online Hertfordshire AimHigher Progression Guide is also linked offering helpful local LMI to complement decision making and local course offers.

5.5. Common Online Application Process

- 5.5.1. Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton** have just embarked on a joint 9-month pilot of new Common Application Process software from VIS Communications. The CAP is an integral part of the 'Forward-Together' prospectus. The authorities are currently piloting the CAP system as a prelude to implementing it across all providers from 2010.

- 5.5.2.** The LSC and Connexions are leading the pilot project, working with eight schools and three FE colleges across the area. The schools involved in piloting the CAP will each offer one form group of Year 11 students the opportunity to make applications in the pilot process. All post 16 providers are involved in the pilot and will use the system to respond to students who make applications to their institutions.
- 5.5.3.** The Luton link to the CAP can be found here:
<http://www.campuslutonprospectus.org.uk/CAP/Home.aspx>
- 5.5.4.** All pilot providers received training in January 2009 and meetings have been scheduled throughout February to work more closely with providers on developing their understanding of the system.
- 5.5.5.** Learners will apply for opportunities through the system by 27 March 2009. April and May will be spent receiving and responding to applications through the system. In June/July the project team will gather feedback from students and providers involved in the pilot and make any necessary changes, ready for a more extensive second phase pilot from September 2009, using a full cohort, before going live in the 2010/11 academic year.
- 5.5.6.** Extensive links have been made with other VIS Communications users to share practice and the Prospectus and CAP are designed to be inter-operable with bordering counties for example, London's prospectus "London Connects" should be accessible through the prospectus by April 2009.
- 5.5.7.** An advertising campaign will coincide with key dates in the CAP pilot timeline to ensure that the Prospectus and CAP are at the forefront of young people's minds when they are thinking of their option choices.
- 5.5.8. Hertfordshire** - Funding has been allocated by the Hertfordshire Strategic planning group to pilot a common application process (CAP) in 2009. The Project will be jointly led by Hertfordshire Youth Connexions and the 14-19 LA team.
- 5.5.9.** A Project Board with responsibility for overseeing the work of developing the CAP, the online prospectus (hertschoices) with key partners and links into the Hertfordshire 14-19 Strategic Partnership Group has been established. The key remit of this group is to ensure that the government's vision of having an integrated prospectus, CAP and e-ILP is met.
- 5.5.10.** One of the 7 Strategic Area Partnership Groups will pilot the CAP and the pilot will comprise 9 secondary schools, one FE college, 2 special schools and WBL providers. It will also include working with geographical neighbours i.e. Buckinghamshire and another SAPG. (One of the software companies that are being considered is VIS who

currently host and run the Bedfordshire and Luton on-line prospectuses and CAP systems.)

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APPENDIX 1

Delivering 14-19 reform – our aims in the Eastern Region

Our programme of reform for the 14-19 phase of education has the following goals:

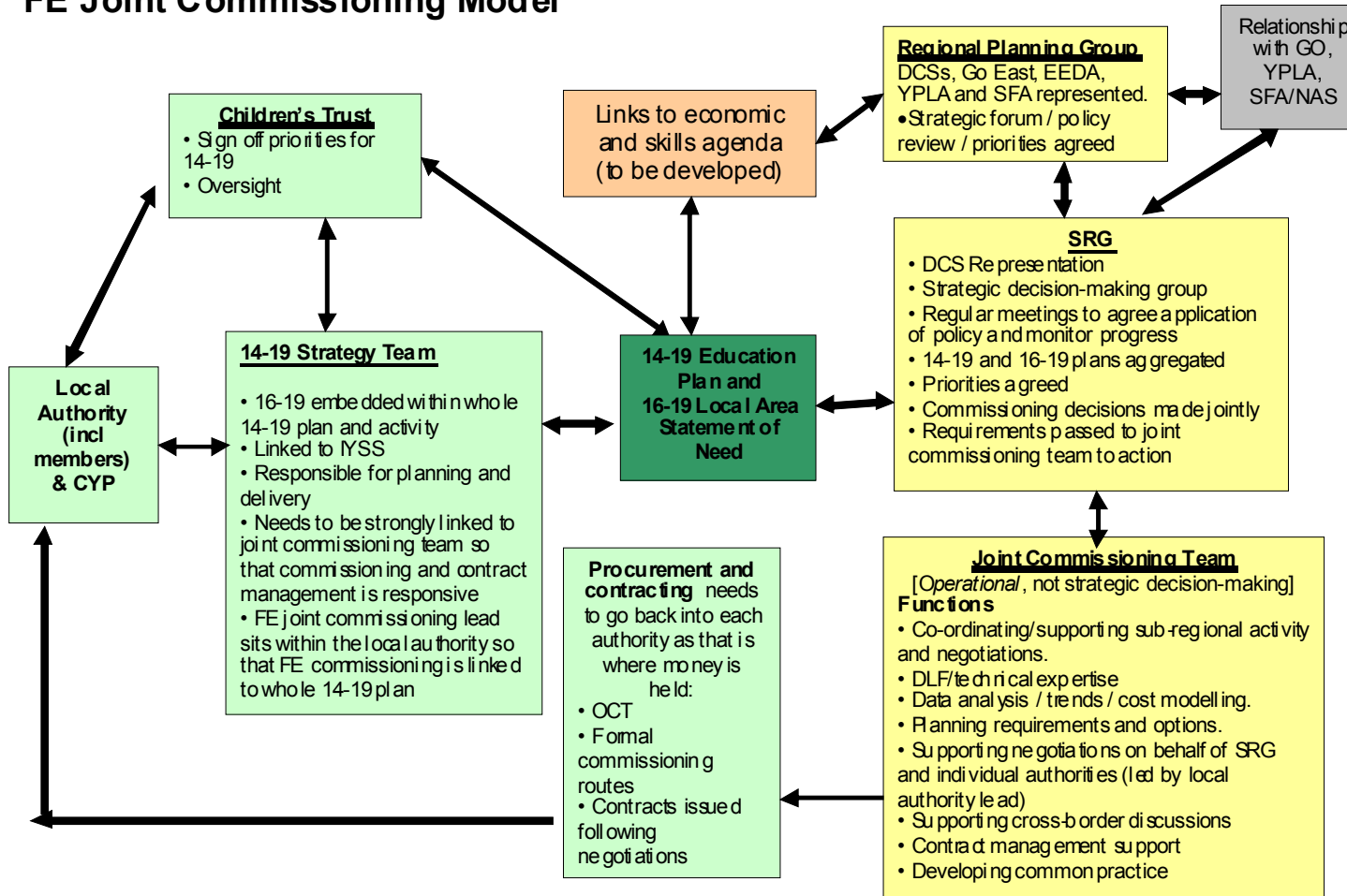
- to provide a greater range of choice and ensure that all young people have access to, participate in and engage with an education that fulfils their potential and stretches and challenges them so that they can succeed in their next stage of education or employment;
- to give young people the knowledge and skills that employers, the economy and the region need to prosper in the 21st century;
- to provide all young people with personalised learning opportunities and an equal opportunity to succeed, improving outcomes overall and narrowing the achievement gap between those who do well and those who do less well.

We are determined to:

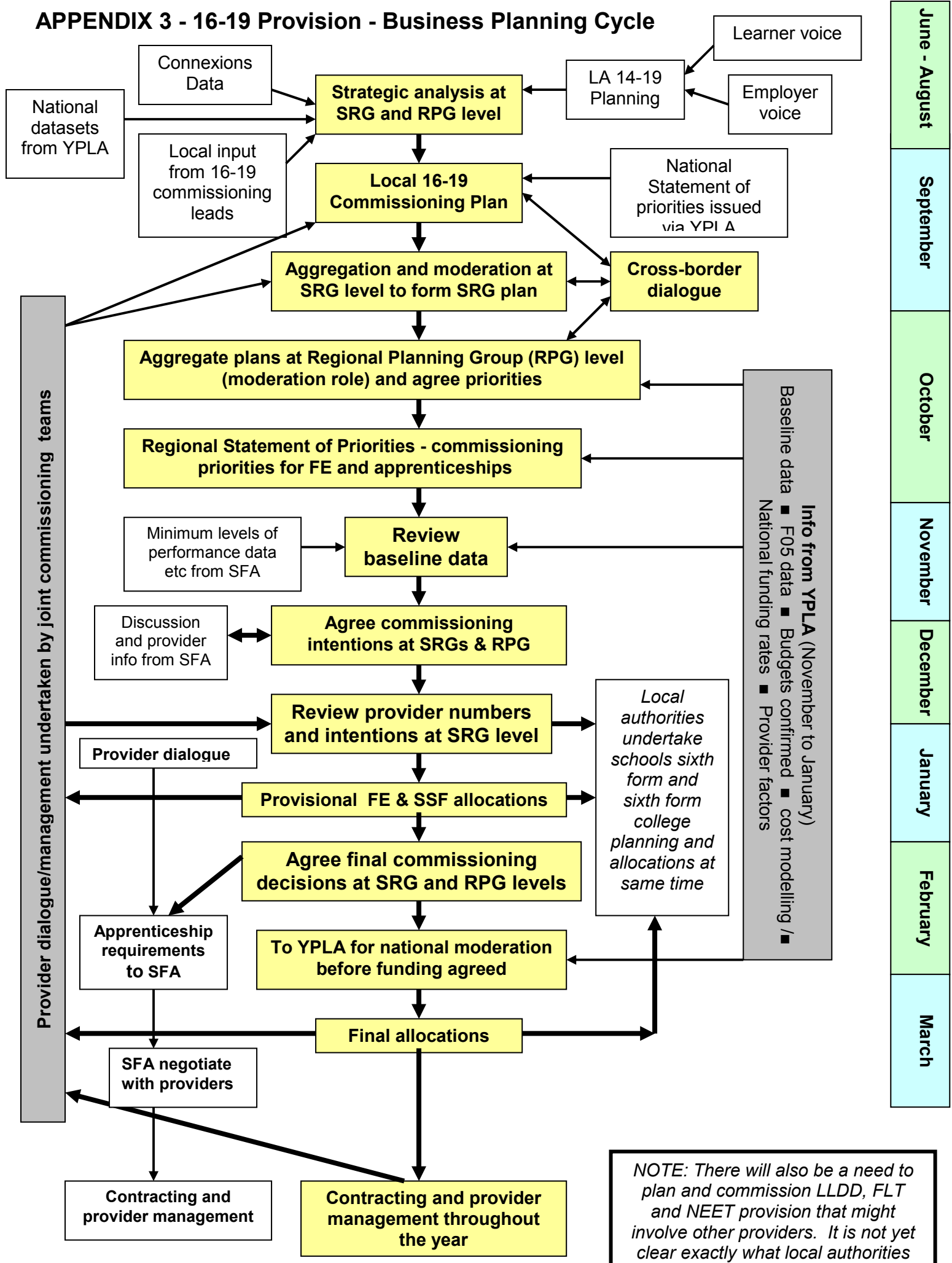
- deliver of the 14-19 entitlement, providing a high quality and valued learning route for every young person, that enables them to participate, achieve and progress;
- provide the right support so that every young person can access and make the most of their choice;
- ensure that all young people have identified clear progression pathways leading to further/higher education or employment opportunities;
- lead strong partnerships, with a coherent structure that supports and delivers excellent learning and support for all young people;
- be ready to meet the needs of all young people through the raising of the compulsory participation age.

APPENDIX 2 – Proposed Joint Commissioning Arrangements

Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Herts and Luton SRG – FE Joint Commissioning Model



APPENDIX 3 - 16-19 Provision - Business Planning Cycle



NOTE: There will also be a need to plan and commission LLDD, FLT and NEET provision that might involve other providers. It is not yet clear exactly what local authorities will be responsible for here.

APPENDIX 4a – Hertfordshire County Council – Record of decision to approve SRG Stage 2 Proposals

DECISION RECORD

Subject: 14-19 Education and Training – Machinery of Government Changes: Establishment of Sub-Regional Groupings for Commissioning	
Staff Contact: John Harris – Director of Children, Schools & Families Tel: 01992 555704	Executive Member: Keith Emsall Portfolio: Education

1. Decision

- 1.1 To approve the proposal that Hertfordshire County Council participates in a formal 'sub-regional grouping' (SRG) with Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Council for the commissioning of education and training for 16 – 19 year olds at stage 2 of the national process to approve sub-regional commissioning arrangements;
- 1.2 To approve the draft stage 2 proposals made by the SRG for establishing readiness for 16 -19 commissioning under shadow arrangements from September 2009, and formally from April 2010;
- 1.3 To authorise the Director of Children, Schools and Families (CSF), within the proposed governance arrangements for the SRG, to take forward detailed operational arrangements to ensure effective commissioning of education and training for 16 – 19 year olds, as outlined in the attached final draft stage 2 submission to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

2. Reasons for the decision

- 2.1 Subject to the completion of legislation, funding for post-16 education and training will pass from Learning and Skills Councils to local authorities, with effect from April 2010. From that time, local authorities will commission and fund sixth form provision directly. With respect to further education provision, local authorities are being required to collaborate in formal sub-regional groupings, and to make submissions by the end of February 2009 to demonstrate the appropriateness of their sub-regional grouping and the fitness for purpose of their proposed sub-regional commissioning arrangements. Travel to learn data indicates that there is a strong case for undertaking sub-regional commissioning in partnership with Luton Borough Council, Bedford Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. Further details are set out in the background report attached.

3. Alternative options considered and rejectedⁱ

- 3.1 The Director of CSF considered whether there were other options for sub-regional groupings in the Eastern Region and concluded that no other option would provide an appropriate fit with travel to learn patterns, which show that show that over 420 young people are educated in the colleges in Hertfordshire but reside in Luton and Bedfordshire. There is a flow of, at most, half this number in the other direction to Cambridgeshire, Essex and London Boroughs.

4. Consultation

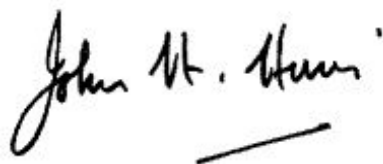
(a) Comments of Executive Member ⁱⁱ ⁱⁱⁱ

'I endorse these proposals, which provide a welcome opportunity for the County Council to lead and commission the full range of 14-19 education and training provision across Schools, Further Education Colleges, and Work-Based Learning Providers.'

(b) Comments of other consultees ^{iv}

The Education Panel considered the proposed SRG and commissioning models at its meeting on January 8th 2009. It supported the proposal that Hertfordshire County Council should join a formal sub-regional grouping with Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Council for the purpose of joint commissioning of further education provision in the sub-region. It recommended commissioning model 1 as its preferred option. This model for commissioning is reflected in the draft Stage 2 SRG submission to the DCSF.

5. Following consultation with, and the concurrence of the Executive Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.



Signed:

Title: Director of Children, Schools & Families

Date: 18th February 2009

6. Copies of agreed document to:

- All consultees
- Chairman, and two Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- hard copy (for public inspection) Head of Democratic Services - Room 222 County Hall.

¹ details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer at the time the decision was made

¹ record any conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member consulted. Also record any dispensations granted by the Council's Standards Committee

¹ If the matter has general significance for the Council and/or is, or is likely to be, controversial, then the officer shall consult the appropriate Executive Member before proceeding. In some cases it will be necessary to consult more than one Executive Member, and in some cases the Leader of the Council will need to be consulted

¹ If the matter has local significance, but no general significance for the Council and no controversial aspects, the officer shall consult or inform the local member in writing (or by e mail) and proceed. It is essential that all officers responsible for delivering services ensure that local members are kept well briefed on issues affecting their areas.

APPENDIX 4b - Excerpt from Council paper for Luton confirming agreement to SRG configuration

EXECUTIVE – 6TH OCTOBER 2008 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor Simmons (Chair); Councillors Bailey, R. J. Davis, Harris, M. Hussain, Khan, Roden, Shaw and Worlding.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Ashraf.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Neale, Patterson and Rutstein.

AGENDA ITEM/ WARD(S) AFFECTED	SUBJECT	DEC. NO.	DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION	OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED
10 All	Raising Expectations: Enabling the System to Deliver for the 14-19 Agenda	EX/175/08	That the proposal that Luton Borough Council participates in formal 'sub-regional grouping' (SRGs) with Hertfordshire County Council, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire for the commissioning of education and training for 16-19 year olds be approved. Reason: Grouping reflects students Travel to learn patterns to FE provision as expected by Central Government.	Suggest an alternative grouping within the Eastern Region, this would mean there would not be a logical grouping in terms of geography and travel-to-learn patterns for learners.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 8th October 2008

CALL IN DEADLINE: 15th October 2008

APPENDIX 4c - Excerpt from Council paper for Luton confirming approval of SRG Stage 2 proposals

EXECUTIVE – 16th FEBRUARY 2009 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor Simmons (Chair); Councillors Bailey, R. J. Davis, Harris, M. Hussain, Khan, Roden, Shaw and Worthing.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Ashraf

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Neale, Pantling and Rutstein

DECISIONS SHEET

AGENDA ITEM/ WARD(S) AFFECTED	SUBJECT	DEC. NO.	DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION	OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED
9	Delivering the 14-19 Agenda: Establishing Sub-Regional Groupings	EX/27/09	<p>(i) That the proposal that Luton Borough Council participates in a formal 'sub-regional grouping' (SRG) with Hertfordshire County Council, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire for the commissioning of education and training for 16 – 19 year olds at stage 2 of the process be approved</p> <p>(ii) That the SRG's stage 2 proposals for establishing readiness for</p>	<p>(i) to suggest revisions to the document</p> <p>(ii) to recommend a timetable in which the Director of Children and Learning seeks approval on a regular basis for taking forward detailed operational arrangements</p>

AGENDA ITEM/ WARD(S) AFFECTED	SUBJECT	DEC. NO.	DECISION AND REASONS FOR DECISION	OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED
			<p>16 -19 commissioning be approved</p> <p>(iii) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director, Children & Learning to take forward detailed operational arrangements to ensure effective commissioning of education and training for 16 – 19 year olds, as outlined in the final draft stage 2 submission to DCSF under the proposed governance arrangements attached as an appendix to the report of the Director of Children and Learning (Ref:9).</p> <p>Reason: To improve the provision of 16-19 education and training for young people in Luton.</p> <p>Note: Councillor Rutstein disclosed a personal interest in the above item, as an LEA Governor at Luton VI Form College.</p>	

The meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 18th February 2009

CALL IN DEADLINE: 25th February 2009

APPENDIX 5

Terms of Reference for Sub-Regional Grouping for Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Luton

Purpose

The purpose of Sub-Regional Groupings is to enable Local Authorities (LAs) to work collaboratively for the future planning and commissioning of 14-19 education across their combined areas.

Membership

The membership of this sub-regional grouping covers the local authority areas of Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Luton.

The regular members of the group will be as follows:

- Directors for Children's Services for each local authority
- 14-19 Strategy Leads for each local authority
- Learning and Skills Council: Area Director/Partnership Director
- Programme Manager for 16-19 Transition Project

Frequency of meeting: Monthly in the first instance with a review in March 2009.

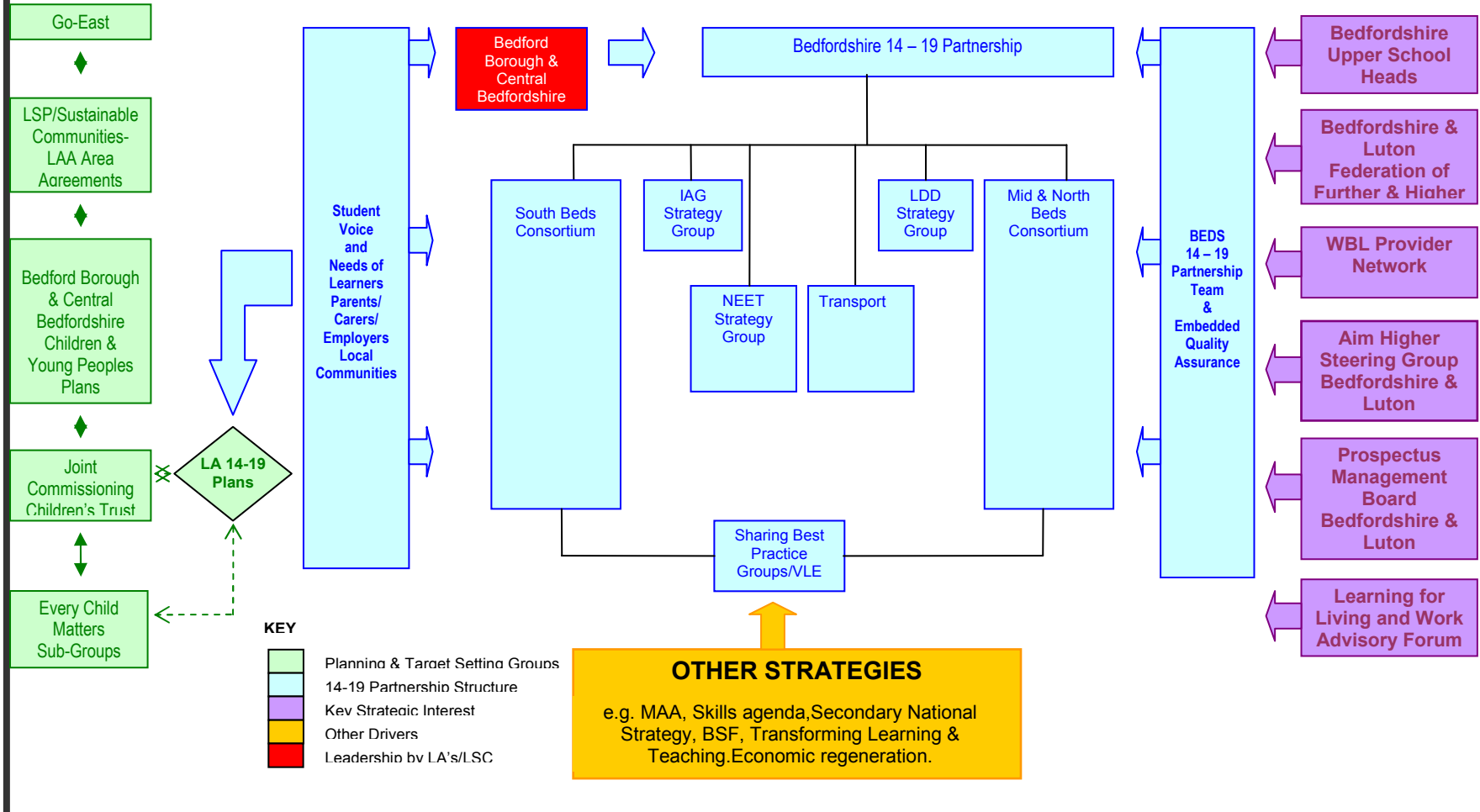
Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the sub regional grouping (SRG) will be to:

1. Develop and agree appropriate governance structures to enable the SRG to operate effectively.
2. Develop and implement effective commissioning processes and monitoring arrangements for 16-19 FE provision across the sub region to enable the SRG to gain Model B approval.
3. Consider learning and skills data to build a picture of the supply and demand for education and training in the sub-region and identify priorities for strategic commissioning within the whole sub-region and within individual areas.
4. Agree the requirements across the sub-region, informed by individual LA commissioning plans, ensuring that economic and skill development and cross-border commissioning needs are taken into account.
5. Deploy commissioning resources in the most cost effective and efficient manner.
6. Support capacity-building activity to secure an effective transition which maximises improvements in provision and outcomes for young people, including implementation of the 14-19 entitlement and reform programme and securing coherent and cost effective provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.
7. Ensure that the SRG is fully ready to undertake the responsibilities of the 14-19 planning and commissioning from September 2009/10 and ensure that there is appropriate communication of transitional arrangements.
8. Ensure that appropriate information is fed into the Shadow Regional Forum to ensure strategic oversight of transition and planning across the region

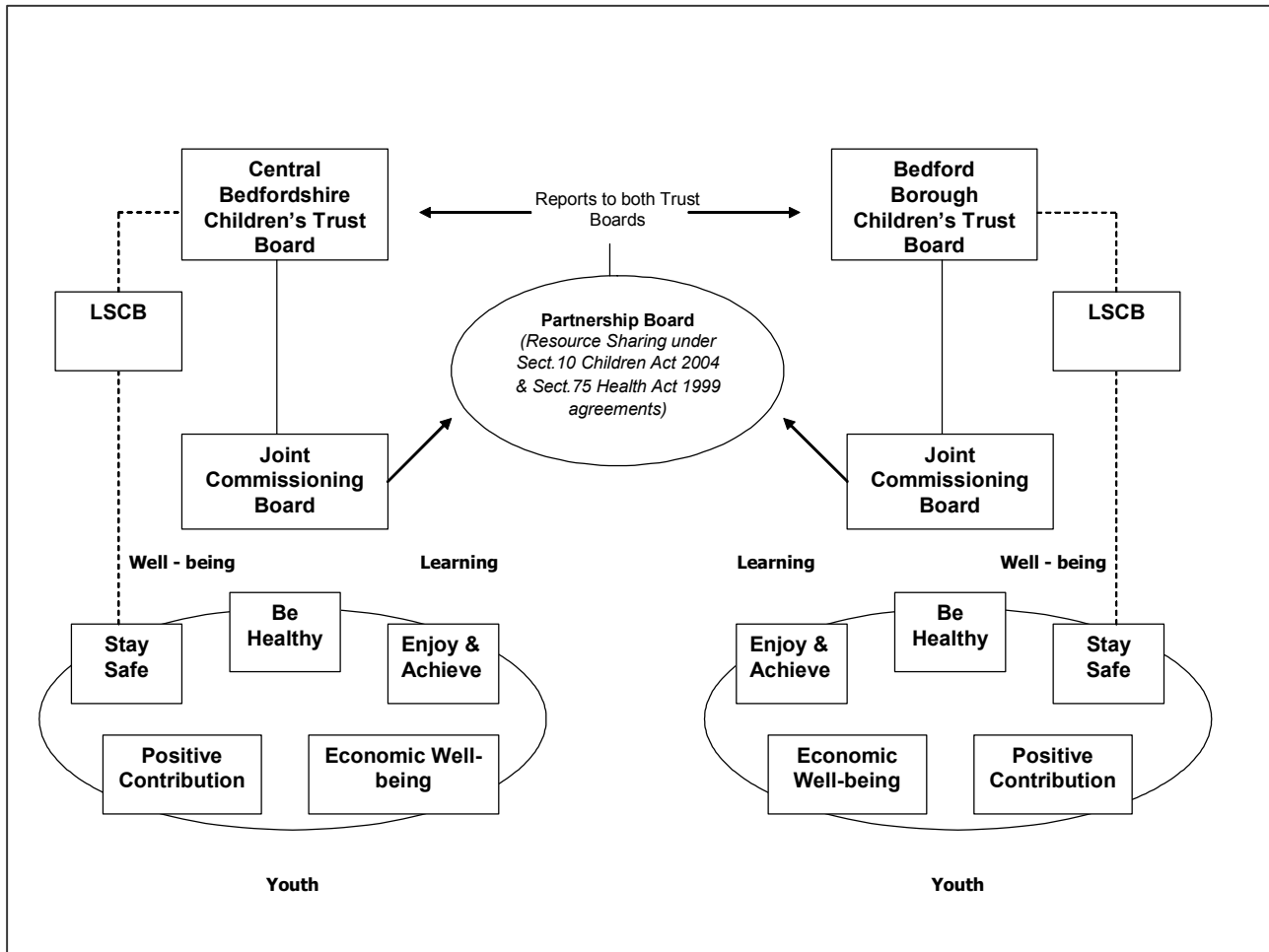
Bedford Borough & Central Bedfordshire Joint 14 - 19 Partnership and Governance

APPENDIX 6a



APPENDIX 6b – Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Children’s Services Commissioning Arrangements

This diagram shows how the two new unitary authorities will be working together to deliver services for children and young people.



The Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has established a Joint Commissioning Board comprising all key partners. The role of the Joint Commissioning Board is to direct the aligned resources of the Trust towards agreed priorities as outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan and its subsequent reviews. The Joint Commissioning Board's wider role has been to conduct the business of the Trust on behalf the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Children's Trust Board.

The Joint Commissioning Board has overseen a comprehensive needs analysis, which will be refreshed annually, along with structured consultations with Children and Young People that inform the priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan and its annual review.

The Board has developed a Multi Agency Resource Envelope that details all the resources expended on children across the partnership, aligned to the five outcomes of Every Child

Matters. The Commissioning Strategy for the partnership is integrated into the Children and Young People's Plan to create a single overarching strategy for the partnership.

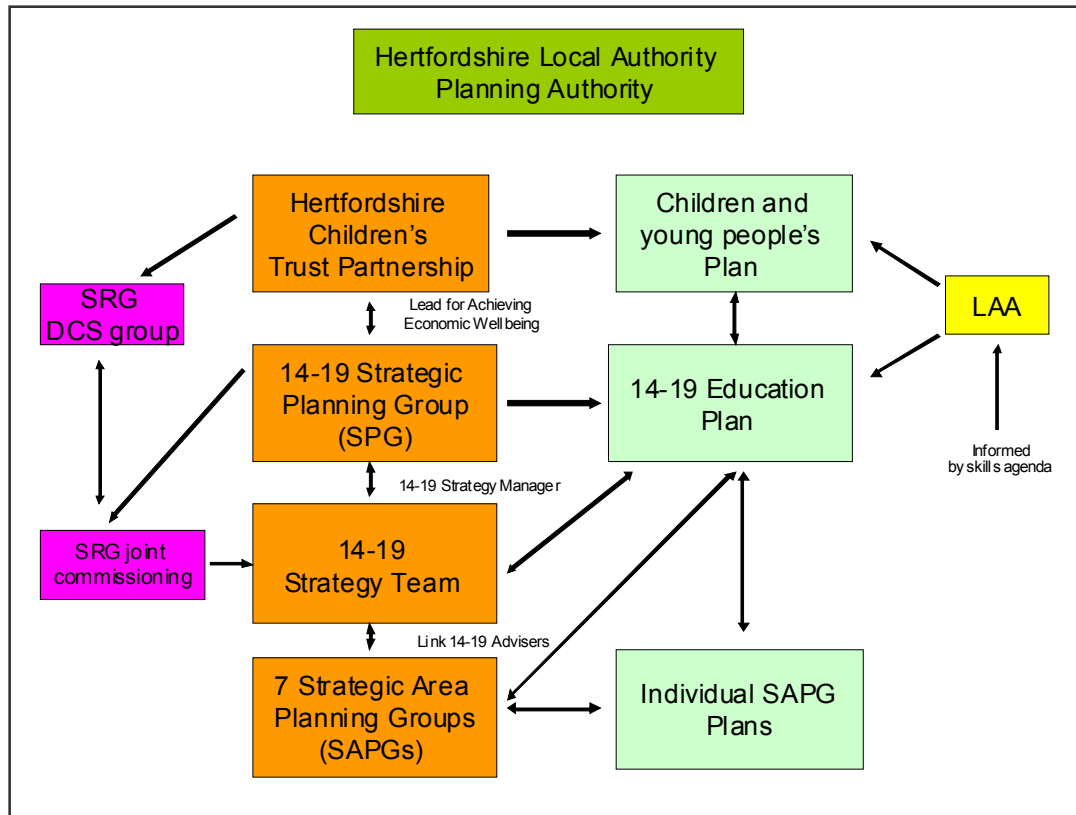
From April 2009 there will be two unitary councils in the geographic boundary of Bedfordshire, both with children's services responsibility, and with separate Children's Trusts. Each Trust will be required to have a Children and Young People's Plan which projects the vision, priorities and commissioning strategy for children's services for all involved agencies and organisations in the area.

These Trusts may decide that mutual resource sharing is one way to deliver services more cost effectively. If so, each council will have to be assured of its ability to exercise its responsibilities for children's services and maintain its accountability for them within any resource sharing agreement. The ability to jointly enter into resource sharing or pooling arrangements may produce efficiency gains for each council and their partners by reducing duplication and the additional administration of multiple contracts and agreements. Voluntary Sector Organisations that operate county-wide services will particularly find this more sustainable as, rather than having two contracts, there would be one joint contract with Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. (This is an option which in due course the two councils may choose to explore or they may choose to make other arrangements.)

This arrangement would be kept under review by both Trusts to ensure it continued to provide both accountability and best value).

The governance of inter-trust resource sharing will be achieved by the setting up of a 'Partnership Board' sitting between the two Children's Trust and composed of members from both councils and key partners. The Board will agree, administer and oversee the shared agreements of the two trusts, reporting back to both authorities and also to the Executive and Elected Members of each council. Sect.10 Children's Act agreements and Sect.75 Health Act agreements will be used to administer arrangements where appropriate (see fig 1). Where either Trust enters into Joint Commissioning Arrangements specific to the area or services of that Council or Trust this will be managed by the Joint Commissioning Board of that Trust.

APPENDIX 6c – Hertfordshire County Council: Linking 16-19 Responsibilities into the Authority



The 14-19 Strategic Planning Group (SPG), is accountable to the Hertfordshire Children's Trust Partnership Executive (HCTP) through the HCTP Executive lead for 'Achieving Economic Well-Being'. HCTP in turn is one of the constituent theme groups of 'Hertfordshire Forward', the county's Local Strategic Partnership.

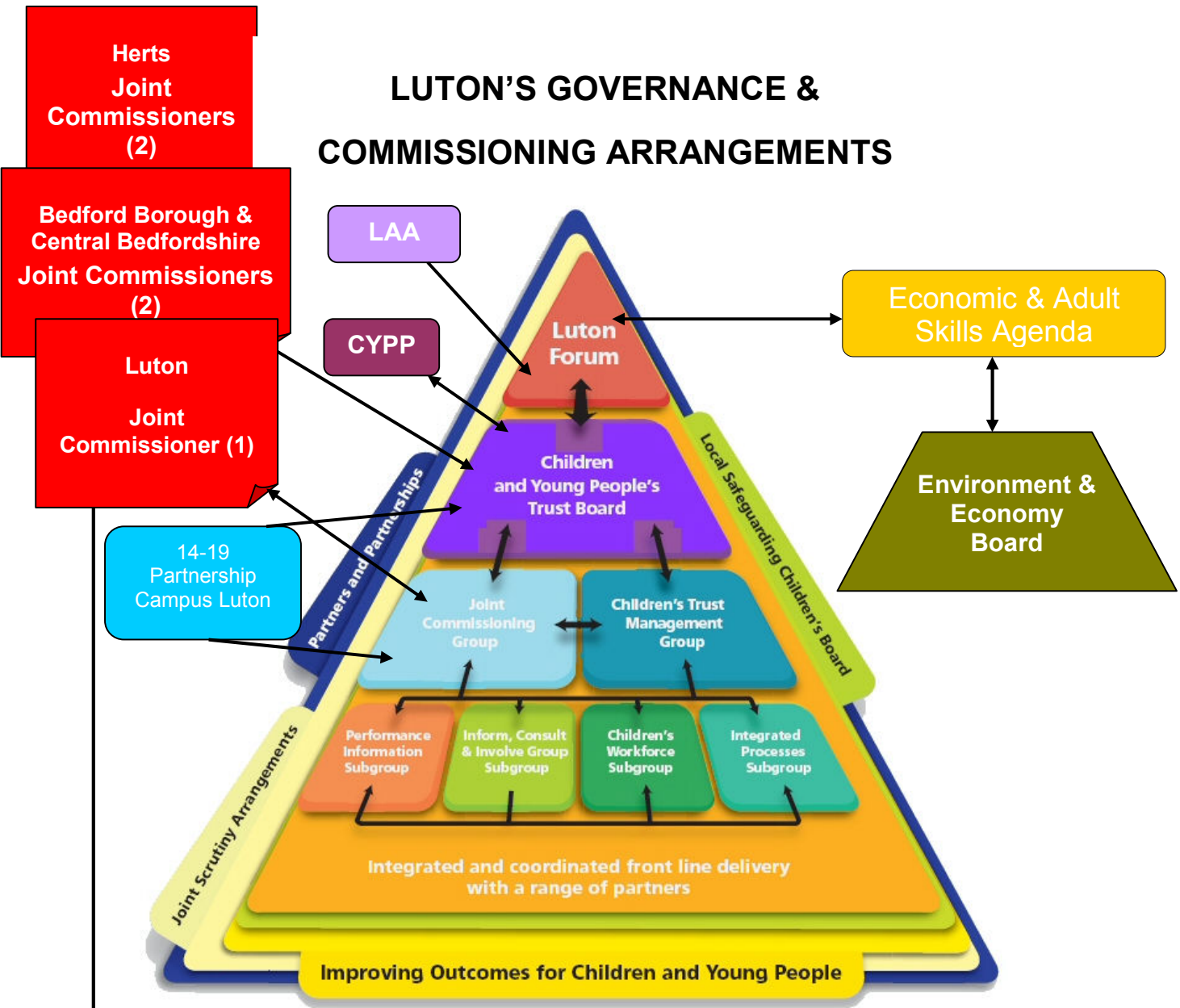
The SPG has approved a 14-19 education and training plan, ensuring that the vision is integrated with Hertfordshire Forward's wider sustainable community strategy, the Children and Young People's plan and the Local Area Agreement. The SPG commissions education and training provision through seven Strategic Area Planning groups (SAPGs) which reflect travel to learn patterns in the county. Each SAPG has a local plan for 14-19 provision, reflecting county-wide and local priorities, delivered through a collaborative curriculum offer across schools, colleges and work-based learning providers.)

The Hertfordshire LAA1 (2006-9) has two stretch targets which focus on the 14-19 agenda and are integrated into the 14-19 education plan. LAA2 (2009-12) includes objectives focused on workforce skills and are again reflected in the plan.

Stakeholder engagement is routed through the HCTP Strategic Stakeholder Group. Members are kept informed of progress and consulted through the County Council's Education Cabinet Panel.

APPENDIX 6d

LUTON'S GOVERNANCE & COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS



Joint Commissioning Team
 (Operational not strategic decision-making)
Role:

- Co-ordinating/supporting sub-regional activity and negotiations
- Demand Led Funding/technical expertise
- Data analysis/trends/cost modelling
- Planning requirements and options
- Supporting negotiations on behalf of SRG and individual LAs led by LA lead
- Supporting cross-border discussions
- Contract management support
- Developing common practice

Sub- Regional Grouping

- DCS representation
- Strategic decision-making group
- 14-19 and 16-19 plans aggregated
- Priorities agreed
- Commissioning decisions made jointly
- Requirements passed to Joint Commissioning Team to action
- Regular meetings to agree application of policy and monitor progress

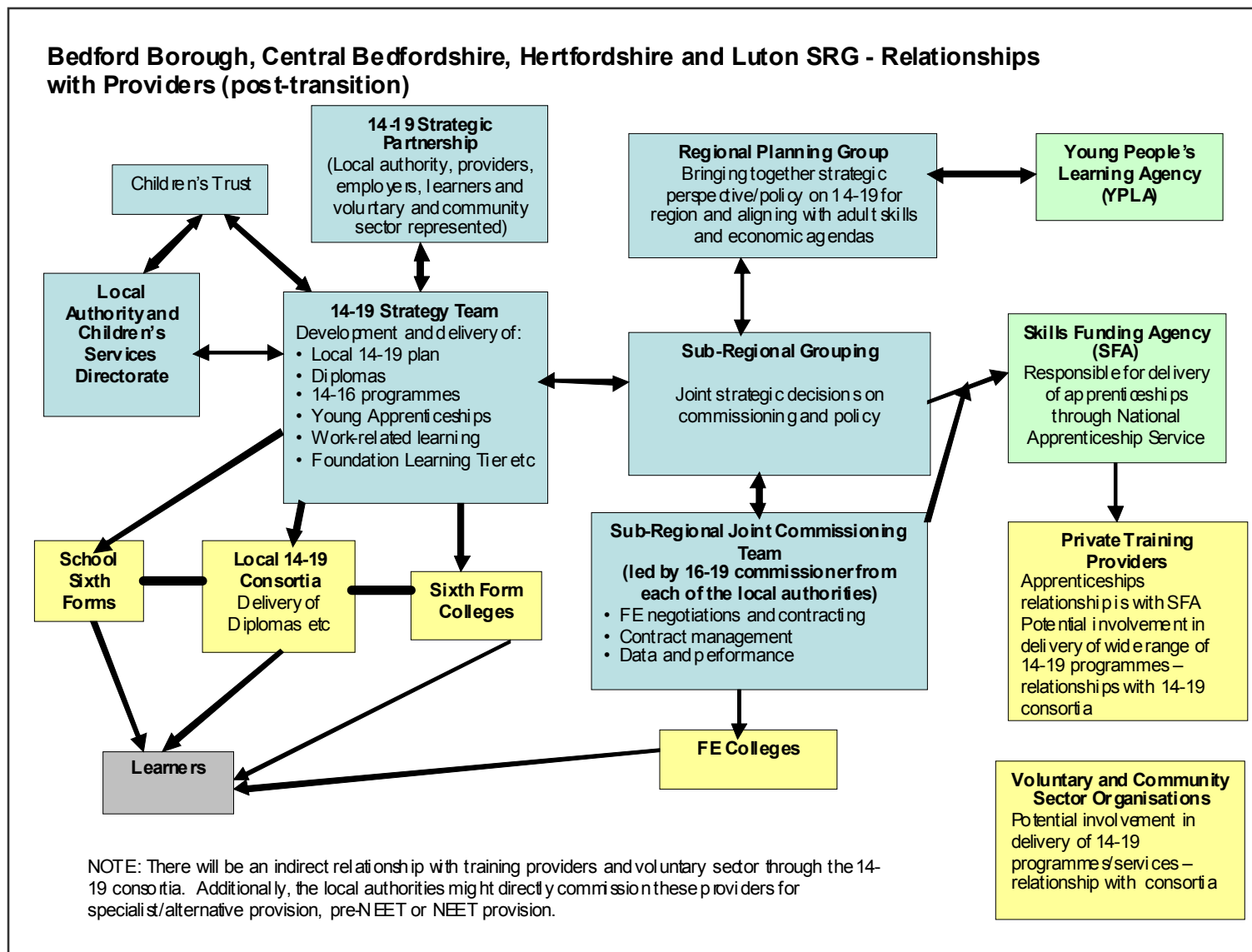
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APPENDIX 7 - Developing Protocols for working with FE and sixth form colleges

Agreements between local authorities and providers will be developed based on the following principles:

1. There will be agreed lead contacts, and their relative areas of responsibility (the local authority's 16-19 joint commissioning lead and the college's senior management team).
2. Agreement about how the authority and the provider will interact through the commissioning and provider management process, ie:
 - When they will meet, and who will be there – reflecting the business planning cycle. The process requires detailed interaction between commissioner and provider at various points during the year, and these interactions should drive the timing of key meetings.
 - There are likely to be more routine provider management meetings in-year.
 - When and how the strategic plans and priorities of each side will be shared and discussed
 - What contribution each side can make to the other's strategy development
 - What data will be provided/requested by each side
 - When funding decisions will be made
 - What appeals process is in place, if any, in respect of funding decisions
 - How performance issues will be addressed (eg under-performance of a provider in terms of the quality of provision, or over-performance in terms of learner recruitment)
 - Whether local authority representatives will be invited to some or all Governors' meetings
3. The agreement will also set out what provider groups are in place or being established to provide a collective voice for providers, and how the SRG will interact with such groups.

APPENDIX 8



Blue boxes denote local authority and SRG commissioning structures. Yellow represents providers.

APPENDIX 9 - Template for staff skills audit

Using this template

This template is based on a self-assessment approach to skills auditing, but tempered by the need for the auditee to provide evidence in support of the self-assessment provided.

The self-assessments are based on the auditee allocating him/herself one of the following scores for each key skill involved in the 16-19 commissioning process:

- **Expert** - current leadership in this area;
- **Good** - can currently operate effectively with little or no day-to-day supervision;
- **Adequate** - can currently operate effectively, but with regular supervision;
- **Weak** - little current knowledge of this area, but enough background knowledge to be able to undertake certain tasks if properly supervised;
- **None** - no current knowledge of this area and able to make little or no contribution.

The evidence column in the template requires the auditee to provide some evidence for the self-assessment. For example, a score of "expert" might be evidenced by "I have been leading a team of 3 people operating in this area for 5 years, led training courses for new joiners and am regularly consulted by others".

APPENDIX 9 (Continued) - SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Local authority:

Staff member:

Function/Skill	Self-assessment	Evidence
Strategic analysis		
Function 1: Data acquisition and analysis		
Function 2: Conducting dialogue with YPLA and the NAS on national and regional priorities		
Function 3: Taking account of, and contributing to, the annual 14-19 plan		
Function 4: Development of capital expenditure plans		
Function 5: Analysing cross-boundary flows		
Developing commissioning plans		
Function 1: Conducting dialogue with providers		

Function/Skill	Self-assessment	Evidence
Function 2: Developing framework for contracting arrangements		
Function 3: Developing arrangements for Information, Advice and Guidance service		
Function 4: Developing arrangements for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities		
Function 5: Securing democratic accountability		
Commissioning		
Function 1: Negotiation and agreement with providers		
Function 2: Agreeing funding arrangements with providers		
Provider monitoring		
Function 1: Monitoring performance against targets		
Function 2: Financial monitoring and management		
Function 3: Conducting		

Function/Skill	Self-assessment	Evidence
dialogue with providers		
Function 4: Reviewing and acting upon the outputs of audit and inspection		

APPENDIX 10

14-19 QUALITY FRAMEWORK

QUALITY STATEMENT

The East of England 14-19 Regional Forum, made up of local authorities 14-19 leads, Learning & Skills Council representatives, the DCSF 14-19 Regional Advisor and the 14-19 leads from the Government Office, have commissioned the development of a quality assurance framework and protocol supporting the delivery of collaborative activity within and across local authority borders. It is anticipated that this framework will in future support sub-regional partnerships and the commissioning process. The framework is currently under consultation with an expected completion date of April 2009. The framework is underpinned by the following Quality Statement.

The Quality Statement is an inclusive document and an essential element of the Quality Framework and will be used in working with partnerships and consortia.

1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

We will

- create a local 14-19 infrastructure capable of managing the changes needed to deliver the full entitlement and improve outcomes for all learners

2. OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

We will:

- set realistic yet challenging targets for the key quantitative measures determined by central government and the local authority
- ensure the sharing of performance data across the partnership and with our local community
- set collective targets that reflect partnership arrangements

3. QUALITY OF PROVISION

We will:

- focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment, and provide a curriculum that meets the needs of all learners, and of the wider community
- nurture the personal and social development of all learners
- maximise access to learning by incorporating e-learning opportunities

4. INFORMATION ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

We will:

- provide all learners with impartial and timely information, advice and guidance, based on the full range of learning and progression opportunities in the entitlement
- ensure that information, advice and guidance takes place on a comprehensive, creative and collaborative basis across the partnership

5. LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

We will:

- ensure that all partners are signed up to a clear and shared vision
- deliver a 14-19 Plan, integral to the Children and Young People's Plan, which is fit to inform the local authority's commissioning plan
- ensure that leadership, management and governance are effective in raising participation and achievement
- promote equality of opportunity, and tackle discrimination in all its forms
- strive to ensure that strategic leadership builds collective ownership through a combination of support and challenge

6. PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

We will:

- commit to working in partnership to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and outcomes for learners
- ensure that the partnership and consortium structures facilitate effective and efficient decision-making, implementation and review
- seek out opportunities to broaden collaboration and bridge boundaries
- ensure that the membership of our partnerships includes all key stakeholders

7. SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION

We will

- ensure that child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, and regularly reviewed, so that children and young people are safe, and feel safe
- promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people through creating and exploiting the opportunities offered by schools and colleges

8. INVOLVEMENT OF LEARNERS

We will

- seek out, listen to, and act upon the views of young people, and put their needs above those of institutions
- actively involve young people in assuring the quality of teaching and learning, and in the design, delivery and evaluation of services

9. INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS CARERS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

We will:

- seek out, listen to and act upon the views of parents and carers
- actively involve parents and carers in assuring the quality of teaching and learning, and in the design, delivery and evaluation of services
- openly share our performance with the local community and work with local people to improve services
- ensure that our priorities and plans express and meet the community's needs and aspirations, including social cohesion

10. EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT¹

We will:

- create mutually beneficial ways of engaging with employers which respect their business priorities
- express our intentions through an engagement strategy designed and developed in consultation with employers

11. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

We will:

- ensure that workforce development links to the organisation's, and partnership's, aims and objectives
- prepare the workforce for the phased introduction of the full entitlement
- seek out and transfer good practice across partnerships through systematic and collaborative workforce development

12. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

We will:

- establish and support a quality framework and quality cycle that underpins all multi-site provision
- strategically manage the quality framework on a cross-partnership basis
- monitor, review and report on the framework to improve its effectiveness
- produce a quality improvement plan, based on the quality report

¹ 'employer' includes those who are self-employed

- celebrate our quality successes

13. RESOURCES

We will:

- ensure high quality facilities are available to support the full entitlement
- ensure an agreed and equitable funding system for collaborative provision
- share facilities across partnerships to improve opportunities for learners
- collaborate with other agencies and sectors to co-locate facilities where this will enhance outcomes for learners
- ensure value for money for learners and all stakeholders

14. TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

We will:

- ensure that transport and travel plans are closely aligned with timetabling to optimise learners' access to the full entitlement
- co-ordinate transport and travel across and between partnerships

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

CYPP – Children and Young People’s Plan

DCSF – Department of Children, Schools and Families

EEDA – East of England Development Agency

ESF – European Social Fund

FfE – Framework for Excellence

FE – Further Education

Go East – Government Office for the East of England

IAG – Information, Advice and Guidance

ILR – Individualised Learner Record

IYSS – Integrated Youth Support Service

LA – Local Authority

LAA – Local Area Agreement

LASN – Local Area Statement of Need

LLDD – Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

LSC – Learning and Skills Council

LSP – Local Strategic Partnership

NAS – National Apprenticeships Service

NEET – Not engaged in Education, Employment or Training

NHS – National Health Service

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education

PCT – Primary Care Trust

RDA – Regional Development Agency

RIEP – Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership

RPG – Regional Planning Group

SFA – Skills Funding Agency

SRG – Sub-Regional Grouping

SSC – Sector Skills Council

WBL – Work Based Learning

YPLA – Young People’s Learning Agency
