

Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 24 January 2011
Subject: 14 – 19 Practical Learning
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children’s Services
Summary: To request that the Forum agrees to continue present 14 – 19 funding arrangements due to the potential risks to provision arising from changes to funding.

Contact Officer: David Bray, School Improvement Services
The Council Offices, Dunstable.

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

Reason for urgency (if appropriate) Risks noted below

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To propose the current level of funding for DSG is continued for 2011/12

Background

1. The 14 – 19 practical learning funding has been used by the 14 – 19 partnership to support around 750 learners who are taking practical courses that meet their needs and interests and which cannot be delivered easily by schools. This arrangement was agreed by the Schools Forum. Changes to school's funding arrangements risk this funding being allocated to all schools as part of the general formula. This poses a significant risk to both the young people concerned and the education providers. The relevant funding for Academies comes directly from Central Government and will not be affected by this proposal.

2. The courses provided fit into three main categories:

Vocational: courses are delivered at FE Colleges for learners aged 14 – 16 (see Appendix 1 for an overview of this group). These courses provide young people with access to practical and vocational courses that meet their needs and interests. They cannot be provided at schools.

Diplomas: courses are designed by employers and are designed to develop the skills and learning that employers require. The courses are developed by the relevant sector skills council - the group that monitors the type of training needs employees in that sector will require in the future (see Appendix 3 for an overview of students on Diploma courses).

Foundation Learning: courses are often personalised and specialist. Many will be delivered by work-based learning providers. The courses include personal skills and functional skills in literacy and numeracy to help these young people to be ready for employment. The courses are at a Foundation level, preparing the young people for further training or skills. Many will be vulnerable learners or have SEND.

3. Currently the LA collects an AMPU element for each student taking a course – 750 students in total. The LA then pays the providers directly for delivering the courses. This ensures that the courses are viable and that there is an effective economy of scale. The LA also pays for and manages the transport needed for young people to access these courses. This management of transport gives benefits of economy of scale. (See Appendix 2 for an overview of students and funding)
4. The process of planning and monitoring is managed through the 14 – 19 Strategy Group (consisting of representatives from each Stakeholder and the 14 – 19 Operational Group. There are also task and finish and regular sub-groups to manage some of the provision. This approach was agreed by the Schools Forum in January 2006.
5. The benefits of the practical learning provision are:
 - Increased attendance and enjoyment for 750 young people.
 - Higher attainment and enjoyment through access to courses that meet their needs.
 - Local employers are likely to receive young people who they can employ.
 - Young people will be better ready for work and less likely to become NEET (not in education training or employment – particularly important within a challenging economic climate).
6. The summary of the current situation is:

Income	
Total DSG	555,818
Total Foundation learning	115,613
Year 11 DfE contribution	25,781
Year 10 DfE contribution	119,000
Transport diploma contribution	23,000
AWPU contributions from schools (not diploma)	404,175
Queensbury Vocational AWPU	38,054
Diploma AWPU from Schools (from Diploma lines)	104,985
Total	1,386,426

Expenditure	
Non-diploma vocational courses	640,188
Foundation Learning costs	151,430
Transport	173,000
Queensbury delivery costs	20,526
Year 1 Diploma costs	73,000
Diploma Deficit	6,240
Diploma Provider Costs	230,225
Total	1,294,609
Balance	91,817

The balance will be re-allocated to schools following confirmation at the January 14 – 19 Strategy Group

Risks associated with ending the funding and placing it within the overall formula to all schools.

7.
 - 300+ young people on practical courses in the present year 10 will be displaced and not able to carry on into year 11. This will have a significant effect on their likely economic well being and cause exceptional difficulties for them, their parents and their schools.
 - 300+ young people in year 9 will not be able to access courses that meet their needs. Some of these will be vulnerable, have special needs/ disabilities or be at risk of not progressing for another reason.
 - The achievement of this group of students and Central Bedfordshire will be affected negatively.
 - The proportion of students becoming NEET (unemployed with little prospects) is likely to rise significantly.
 - The needs of local employers will not be met as effectively, consequently having a negative effect on the local economy.
 - The planned statutory raise in participation age for 2013 and 2015 will be much more difficult to achieve due to of lack of progression by a significant group of students.
 - The partnership, including schools, will lose significant amounts of additional funding because the DSG will not be available to support courses. This will result in courses being cancelled; additional funding will be not enough to support delivery and will have to be returned.
 - Providers in the area (FE and work based learning) will have to make significant numbers of staff redundant because courses are not running.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Overview of vocational course delivery

Appendix 2 – Overview of courses and costs

Appendix 3 – Overview of Diploma courses