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**Meeting:** Schools Forum

**Date:** 28 November 2011

**Subject:** 14–19 Practical Learning

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services

**Summary:** To ask the Forum to note the contents of this update and the proposal to continue with the present 14–19 funding arrangements for 2012/13 due to the potential risks to provision arising from changes to funding.

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**Contact Officer:** David Bray, Learning Services  
Watling House, Dunstable

**Public/Exempt:** Public

**Wards Affected:** All

**Function of:** Council

**Reason for urgency**  
(if appropriate)

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. That the current arrangement is maintained for 2012/13 acknowledging the amount of top slice will be reduced in line with the number of maintained schools.**

#### **Background**

- 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. These courses include practical and vocational options delivered by FE Colleges and other providers and many require specialist facilities, staffing or other provision.

The School's Forum in June 2009 resolved that the 14 - 19 Strategic Partnership should hold the relevant 'top slice' of DSG (£555,818 11/12) and Diploma Funding Grant (£160,335 11/12) which was to mitigate against the risk that students might not be able to carry on with courses already started or have the option to take new courses.

#### **Update**

- The relevant funding for Academies comes directly from Central Government and falls outside this arrangement. Academies are responsible for funding all provision that they access from their own budget (received directly from the YPLA).

3. The practical learning courses provided are determined by schools. LA schools receive a proportion of the practical learning funding whilst they are LA maintained. The proportion is based on a formula which takes into account the number of students in Key Stage 4. Once the funding is allocated to schools the provider is responsible for all costs associated with course delivery, including transport costs.
4. Funding is passported to school budgets every month. This is a change from the previous policy which sought to shape the co-ordination of planning and delivery and to bring economies of scale to bear (in line with government policy at the time). This change reflects the change in policy of the coalition government which wishes to see an open and competitive market for course provision, rather than central planning. For this reason funding is now allocated directly to schools for allocation as decided by each provider. There is therefore no mechanism that would enable a report back to the School's Forum on the impact of this funding.
5. The process of overall strategic direction for 14–19 provision, including the requirement to raise the participation age (RPA) is managed through the 14–19 Strategy Group. This is chaired by a provider on a rotating basis and is currently chaired by the Chief Executive of Central Bedfordshire College. An operational group supporting delivery is chaired by a provider (currently Redborne Upper School).
4. The benefits of the practical learning provision are:
  - Increased attendance and enjoyment for up to 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)

**Appendices:**

None