

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
27 OCTOBER 2010**

DELIVERING THE 14 – 19 EDUCATION ENTITLEMENT in BRACKNELL FOREST

Director of Children, Young People & Learning

A progress report in respect of the implementation of the 14-19 education entitlement, including an update on the new Diploma courses.

1. SUGGESTED ACTION

- 1.1 That the Children Young People & Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel note the Report.

2. Recent developments

- 2.1 The new coalition government has removed the requirement for young people to have access to all Diploma lines of learning by 2013. There will therefore be no further Diploma Gateways where the LA sought approval on behalf of schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College to offer the new Diploma courses. Schools and Colleges will therefore be free to offer the Diplomas which they feel will best meet the needs of their students. National planning for Diplomas in humanities, languages and science has been stopped.
- 2.2 Bracknell Forest is currently discussing the future Diploma offer with local providers, including all six secondary schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College. Other aspects of provision will also be considered as part of this review, including the Increased Flexibility Programme, Young Apprenticeships, Foundation Learning and alternative vocational qualifications, including BTECs and OCR Nationals.
- 2.3 The LA is developing a new vocational skills centre in partnership with Wokingham LA and the College. This will be created on the former Wick Hill site and partly use facilities formerly part of Garth Hill college.

3. Current take up of Diploma courses

- 3.1 Students in our schools were offered the option of taking a Diploma in four areas. Three of these recruited and have now started. These are:

Hair & Beauty at Wick Hill (Bracknell & Wokingham College), Level 2 KS4,
Six Bracknell Forest students (plus students from Wokingham)

Business, Administration & Finance at Brakenhale school, Level 2 KS4,
Eight Bracknell Forest students

IT at Sandhurst school, Level 2 KS4,
Three Bracknell Forest students

- 3.2 This level of take-up is in line with that experienced in the other Berkshire LAs. There was insufficient demand to run Diploma courses at post-16. Reasons for the low take-up of Diplomas both locally and nationally may include perceptions that it is a new and relatively 'untried' qualification, particularly where popular BTEC courses are already established and some adverse reports that students have found Diplomas less practical and more challenging than had been envisaged.
- 3.3 Bracknell Forest has gained approval to offer the following additional Diploma lines of learning from September 2011.
- Creative & Media at Garth Hill College, Brakenhale, Bracknell & Wokingham College
 - Engineering at Bracknell & Wokingham College
 - Construction & Built Environment at Bracknell & Wokingham College
 - Society Health and Development at Bracknell & Wokingham College
 - Sport & Active Leisure at Easthampstead Park
- 3.4 In addition to developing these Diplomas, all providers are considering alternative vocational provision such as BTECs in order to ensure that the enhanced range of opportunities that will be available will be the most appropriate ones from the young people of Bracknell Forest.
- 3.5 The targeted capital fund has been used to enhance facilities at all schools in preparation for the delivery of Diplomas. Particular developments include catering facilities at Garth Hill College, a business suite as part of the new sixth form centre at Edgbarrow school and refurbished business and ICT suites at Brakenhale, Ranelagh and Sandhurst schools. The development of sporting facilities at Easthampstead Park school is ongoing. These improved facilities are available for the benefit of all learners in these institutions.

4. Other developments in provision

- 4.1 The number of learners following Young Apprenticeship programmes in Key Stage 4 increased this year – this may be due to improved access to this provision facilitated by the collaborative timetable.
- 4.2 Bracknell & Wokingham College's Eastern Road site has now closed and all 14-16 vocational options provided by the College are now delivered at the Wick Hill site. Bracknell Forest and Wokingham LAs have supported the refurbishment of the facilities which, when this work has been completed, will offer a broader range of improved facilities than was available at Eastern Road.
- 4.3 All schools now teach functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT.
- 4.4 Schools have increased their offer of BTEC and OCR National qualifications, providing additional choices for students alongside Diploma courses. These courses will be available alongside the core subjects and will reinforce the degree of choice available to young people, both at Key Stage 4 and Post-16. Schools and colleges will continue to collaborate to ensure that there is effective use of improved facilities and the broadest possible access to new courses and qualifications.
- 4.5 More students are accessing the collaborative delivery of AS courses, with 36 students studying at least one AS level other than in their 'home' school or college.

- 4.6 Most schools have conducted an audit of Foundation Learning provision and will use this to plan further developments, including greater collaborative delivery across the LA.

5. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

- 5.1 A Berkshire area wide prospectus (BOPS) is available. A common application process has been trialled in Reading and in Wokingham.
- 5.2 The Bracknell Forest IAG Strategy Group has met regularly. Developments included the use of similar wording for all Diploma lines, IFP and YA offer in school option booklets.
- 5.3 An Impact Universal production "Opt into Learning" was presented to Year 9 students in five schools and the LA 14-19 Consortium Coordinator attended relevant option evening events at individual schools to publicise diploma availability.
- 5.4 A Diploma Roadshow was held at the Leisure Centre (Connexions and the College also attended to showcase alternatives to Diplomas)
- 5.5 A "Stay in learning" presentation for Year 11 students is being developed for 2010/11 in addition to the Year 9 "Opt into Learning" presentation. As the provision of services by Connexions has been affected by in-year reductions in grant funding, individual school partnership agreements have been adjusted to minimise the impact of this. Current Connexions services will continue in Bracknell Forest until August 31st 2011. Discussions with the other Berkshire LAs are underway with regard to a new Framework Agreement for IAG services, to be in place from September 2011.

6 Other relevant national developments

- 6.1 Plans for the Raising of the Participation Age to 17 in 2013 and to 18 in 2015 are being reviewed by the new coalition government who have also announced an independent review of vocational qualifications, with an interim report to be available by the end of 2011 and the full findings to be presented in the spring of 2012.
- 6.2 The funding mechanism for 16 – 19 education and training has been revised. Local Authorities will retain responsibility for ensuring that there is sufficient appropriate provision available but funding for schools will be based on 'lagged student numbers' rather than commissioned places. This has implications for the future commissioning of course provision.
- 6.3 An Education white paper will be published later in 2010 with details of further proposals relating to curriculum and qualifications reform and performance measures.

7 Local priorities and actions

- 7.1 The LA in partnership with schools and the College will seek to:
- Maintain the effectiveness of a reconfigured 14 – 19 Partnership in order to manage the securing of an appropriate range of provision at post-16 in line with the identified commissioning priorities.
 - Monitor and review progression routes from Key Stage 4 to post 16 to ensure all students are able to access courses appropriate provision.

- Review with providers the curriculum offer available at Key Stage 4 and post-16, including; Diplomas, the Increased Flexibility Programme, Young Apprenticeships, Foundation Learning and alternative vocational qualifications, including BTEC and OCR Nationals.
- Develop local vocational provision to a high standard to ensure appropriate learning pathways and progression opportunities are available to all young people.
- Respond proactively to any further national policies and initiatives.
- Continue to monitor outcomes for learners to ensure that provision meets learner needs.

Contact for further information

Martin Surrell (Senior Adviser)
Martin.Surrell@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
01344 354033