

TO: THE EXECUTIVE
16 MARCH 2010

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT: DELIVERING THE 14 – 19 EDUCATION
ENTITLEMENT**

Acting Director of Children, Young People and Learning

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 To determine the Executive's response to the recommendations in the report by the Children Services and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel's Working Group on 14 – 19 Education.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to the Executive that:

- 2.1 **the responses and recommendations outlined in the supporting information in paragraph 5 below be approved;**
- 2.3 **they thank the members of the Working Group for their report.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Working Group has spent considerable time reflecting on all the issues with the support of appropriate officers and partners in the delivery of education and training for young people in this age group. As a consequence the report and recommendations are fully informed and merit support.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The following information is the considered response to the nine recommendations made by the Children Services and Learning Scrutiny Panel Working Group.
- 5.2 **(a) Working Group Recommendation** Copies of this report be sent to the Secretary of State and Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families to inform them of the Working Group's concerns that the Diploma is unlikely to meet the needs of all children and young people.

Agreed. The recommendations of the Working Group have been considered by the Bracknell Forest 14–19 Partnership. The members of this group feel that it should be recognised that the 14–19 entitlement, which must be in place by 2013, comprises Foundation Learning, Apprenticeships and existing provision including GCSE and A

Level qualifications in addition to Diplomas: together this provides a range of provision that should meet the needs of all children and young people.

The Executive Member for Education will include this comment in a letter to accompany the Report when it is sent to the Secretary of State and the Shadow Secretary of State.

- 5.3 **(b) Working Group Recommendation** More promotion and delivery of clearer and consistent messages concerning the new 14-19 entitlement be pursued with particular emphasis on accessible information for young people to enable them to make an informed choice.

Agreed. The Bracknell Forest Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy (IAG) Group has continued to support the provision of full and impartial information, advice and guidance for all young people. This group will formulate an action plan in response to an independent audit of this provision, which was undertaken in the autumn term of 2009. The DCSF published 'Quality, choice and aspiration: A strategy for young people's information, advice and guidance' in October 2009. This document will inform and guide the Bracknell Forest IAG Strategy. The strong local partnership involving Connexions Berkshire supports this work.

- 5.4 **(c) Working Group Recommendation** Bracknell Forest secondary schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College be encouraged to deliver Level 1 Diplomas and tailor them as much as possible towards meeting the needs of NEETs, those at risk of becoming NEET and the less academically able

Agreed. Bracknell Forest secondary schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College are members of the 14–19 Partnership, which recognises the need to continue developing the range of provision available locally in order to meet the needs of NEETs, those at risk of becoming NEET and the less academically able. Where appropriate, this will include the provision of Level 1 Diplomas. The further implementation of Foundation Learning will also make a significant contribution to this provision. There have been significant developments in this aspect of provision since the Working Group undertook its research. An initial Foundation Learning outline was included in the Diploma Gateway 4 application submitted to DCSF in November 2009 and this will be followed by a full Foundation Learning Plan in the coming months as part of a revision of the 14–19 Education Plan.

- 5.5 **(d) Working Group Recommendation** Bracknell and Wokingham College and the secondary schools in the Borough be encouraged to offer taster courses in respect of Diplomas and to offer more flexibility within them.

Agreed. Taster sessions were made available in February 2010 to support young people in making informed choices as part of their options process. The DCSF Diploma Roadshow was also available to all young people in years 9 and 11 and their parents. These activities will be fully evaluated and the IAG Strategy Group will consider ways in which they may be developed in future years. The views of young people will be sought as part of this process.

- 5.6 **(e) Working Group Recommendation** Best practice by local authorities, such as Reading Borough Council, which has successfully commenced the offering of the 14-19 entitlement be forwarded to schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College to assist them to overcome the logistical difficulties associated with Diploma delivery i.e. Transport arrangements, monitoring and addressing underperformance, discipline, school uniforms and securing sufficient work placements.

Agreed. Officers of the local authority work closely with colleagues from across the county through the Berkshire Advisory Group and are fully engaged in the national programme of Diploma Learning Visits to Local Authorities who have been identified as having developed good practice.

Good practice is shared with staff in schools and colleges preparing for Diploma delivery as well as through meetings of the Curriculum Managers' Group, IAG Strategy Group and the Examinations Officers' Group. Support from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, the National Strategies' Regional Adviser for Functional Skills, the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency and the Awarding Bodies has also been made available. Teaching staff developing the Diplomas are also able to join the appropriate line of learning network for their subject area.

In line with good practice elsewhere and in consultation with the secondary schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College, the local authority is developing a comprehensive staff handbook which addresses the wide range of logistical and other implementation issues associated with the development of Diplomas. Appropriate policies and procedures are being developed as part of this. The East Berkshire Education Business Partnership has been fully engaged in the development of Diplomas and will play the lead role in securing work experience placements.

5.7 **(f) Working Group Recommendation** A robust process to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people studying Diplomas be put in place.

Agreed. The 14 – 19 Partnership has prepared a robust process to ensure the safeguarding of Diploma learners to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place. These form part of a comprehensive staff handbook, which ensures that all members of staff involved in the delivery of Diplomas are aware of and able to implement these. Officers of the local authority are investigating information technology applications which can support the secure and timely transfer of essential information between institutions where a student is studying in more than one location for aspects of their Diploma programme.

5.8 **(g) Working Group Recommendation** A 14-19 Champion, preferably the Executive Member for Education, be appointed to promote and ensure the delivery of the new 14-19 entitlement.

Agreed. The Executive Member for Education will be pleased to assume the role of 14–19 Champion and will meet with the 14–19 Partnership to discuss ways in which the effectiveness of this role can be maximised.

5.9 **(h) Working Group Recommendation** The government be made aware that the level of national funding available for distribution at a local level needs to be sufficient to meet the likely higher demand for Diploma courses during the current economic climate.

Agreed. For young people aged 14 – 16 following a Diploma programme, additional national funding of £1,000 per learner is made available on top of the age weighted pupil unit funding received by schools. Post-16 funding is subject to a national funding formula which recognises the different costs associated with different types of courses. The Executive Member for Education will make strenuous representation

in support of appropriate levels of funding for Diplomas when writing to the Secretary of State and the Shadow Secretary of State (see 5.2).

- 5.10 **(i) Working Group Recommendation** The implementation of Diplomas should be monitored and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel receive annual updates in respect of the number of pupils studying Diplomas in each school/college, a breakdown of the Diploma subjects being studied, the number of courses completed, the success rate and future career path of Diploma graduates.

Agreed. Annual reports as outlined in this recommendation will be presented by officers of the local authority. The first information will be available for post-16 students undertaking a Diploma in one year in the autumn term of 2011. Students aged 14–16 and those post-16 students undertaking an Advanced Level Diploma will follow a two-year programme, for which a report will be available in the autumn term of 2012.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The provision of 14-19 education is a Schools Budget item, and as such is fully funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant. Additional top up funding for the delivery of Diplomas and post 16 courses of education will be allocated to schools, based on national funding rates. Funding goes directly to schools, who will need to manage associated costs within their overall funding streams. Therefore, there are no direct financial implications on the Council.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The recommendations will assist in ensuring that a full range of provision will be available to ensure that young people in Bracknell Forest have access to learning opportunities which meet their needs, interests and aspirations.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 As the provision of the revised 14–19 entitlement by 2013 is a statutory requirement, not carrying out the recommendations will put at risk the Council's overall performance.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Bracknell Forest 14–19 Partnership.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Discussion at 14–19 Partnership meeting.

Representations Received

7.3 These are included in paragraph 5.2.

Background Papers

Report by the Working Group of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Panel
'Delivering the 14–19 Education Entitlement'

Contact for further information

Martin Surrell, Senior Adviser: Learning and Achievement 01344 354033
martin.surrell@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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