

14-19 Briefing Paper. Young People's Overview Scrutiny Committee 20th June 2008

Introduction

- This report covers the period up to June 2008. The Government's 14-19 Agenda requires a major transformation in the way education and curriculum is delivered. By 2013 all 14-19 learners should be able to choose from one of 4 educational progression routes:- Diplomas (17 in total); Apprenticeships; GCSEs and A Levels; Foundation Learning Tier. It is clear that no one school or college can deliver this breadth of curriculum, hence the need for partnership working. It is acknowledged by the DCSF that this a particularly challenging agenda for rural areas
- The 14-19 agenda is underpinned by the government's determination to raise the age of participation in education or training, to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015.
- There is a clear requirement for all Local Authorities to develop their central strategic role in building the curriculum entitlement to 2013. North Yorkshire's Strategic Education Plan for 11 -19 provision incorporates our strategy for the roll out of Diplomas across the county, including access for all learners to the full curriculum entitlement. The plan addresses not only the general issues around curriculum reform, but those challenges that are specific to us in North Yorkshire. In tandem with the Strategic Plan, work is already well underway on the underpinning Implementation Plan.
- The key element of our plan is to give strategic direction to our 6 Area Learning Partnerships (consortia). We are also supporting them with practical help with some of the cross cutting themes of the 14-19 Agenda, through sharing of best practice, co-ordinated working and cross county groups. To this end we are already adopting a cross directorate approach to issues around transport, and in similar vein we are developing cross county support for workforce and curriculum development, and employer engagement.
- County progress is checked annually by the DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families) against 14 separate measures or 'Progress Checks', which are rated red, amber, green.

Partnership and Collaboration Structures

- Over the last 3 years the North Yorkshire 14-19 Partnership structure has continued to develop well. There are increased levels of collaboration and curriculum development, and improved resource arrangements. From September 2008 we will have 6 Area Learning Partnership groups (ALPs) in Craven, Hambleton and Richmondshire, Harrogate, North Yorkshire Coast, Ryedale and Selby, covering the whole county. These partnerships bring together schools, colleges, training providers and any other group or institution that offers courses to 14-19 year old learners. All the groups work within the same framework with the broad aim of improving provision across their local area. As the 14-19 strategy develops there will be the further development of partnerships across county borders and across the ALPs.
- All ALPs have established curriculum working groups. These groups work collaboratively, with increased central direction, to ensure that there is breadth of provision across the local areas. However, the 17 Diploma lines will not be delivered within each of the 6 ALPs. Curriculum groups' planning includes aspects such as the area wide curriculum and courses; resource allocation; transport; and standardised quality assurance protocols. The groups receive clear criteria, support and guidance in building collaborative action plans. This includes guidance regarding inclusion especially for vulnerable and LDD learners

- New links are being developed with small training providers, a previously under represented group, via the local Providers in Partnership group. These training providers are offering a more responsive and cost effective mix of provision and training
- Partnerships continue to develop well with greater openness, information sharing and a wider inclusive membership including local Special schools, PRUs and REOTAS.

Curriculum Development and Workforce Development (WFD)

- Our North Yorkshire 14-19 partnership areas had much to celebrate when the Diploma Gateway results were announced in March 2008. Every partnership area had at least one successful bid. The county was awarded two bids at Category 1, a first for a rural authority. Six other bids, covering 5 different Diploma lines, will also begin delivery in 2009. In addition all 5 of our original bids made last year in Gateway 1 have been given approval for a 2009 start, having successfully met the pre conditions set by the government.
- This means we will have 14 separate Diploma lines covering all our partnership areas running from September 2009.
- The next round of Diploma Gateway submissions is due in November 2008. Development plans for each ALP have to demonstrate the clear and agreed central strategic vision for county roll out to the 2013 curriculum entitlement.
- Curriculum offers have been improved in all 6 Partnerships for September 2007. Provision has been extended and common timetables produced to facilitate shared provision,
- All local areas have Workforce Development as an integral part of their development plans. From June 2008 a national network of Consortium Lead Consultants is in place to help co-ordinate this area of work. We have encouraged strong development of Diploma network groups in all areas, mirroring diploma lines. We will support this at county level with two additional posts focusing on employer engagement, as well as additional workforce support to ensure sharing of best practice and co-ordination across the county.
- County wide conferences on 14-19 issues and on Personalisation took place in summer 2007 and for the re-launch of the 'Putting the Learner First' 14-19 Strategy in October 2007. In April 2008 we held a major strategic conference concentrating on the challenges of the curriculum entitlement and the imminent Strategic Plan.

Learner entitlement

- The Strategic Plan has a clear learner entitlement statement, which is: "We will put the learner first, wherever they live or whatever their needs, by maximising their life chances, giving them opportunities to succeed and removing barriers for those at risk of underachievement".
- Young people's views are shaping both curriculum provision and the area wide prospectus through a range of learner inputs, most notably some high profile learner conferences. The further development of learner voice within the 14-19 strategy is a key priority.

Participation and Access / Advice and Guidance

- Meeting the goal of ensuring that all young people are participating in education, training or work based learning means that there has to be an action plan for any young person who is not in education, training or employment (NEET). There is now a county NEET strategy plan being implemented to ensure we reduce even further the low numbers in this group and specifically target those areas of deprivation where numbers are higher. This is a key county target and involves a wide range of curriculum intervention, support, coaching and mentoring programmes using a variety of funding sources. All such developments are integrated into local partnership plans.

- Raising aspirations, is also a vital way of increasing participation. This has been an important focus in the East of the county, especially with young males. A sub group has created and completed an ambitious outline plan , involving local high profile launch with accompanying publicity. At county level the 14-19 partnership now has full integration with the 'Aim Higher' project to ensure a fairer coverage of such activities across the county
- There is a specific requirement to develop provision for pupils who are LDD, SEN, Gifted and Talented and disaffected. These issues are being tackled by specific ALPs within their plans.
- Rurality is a specific issue that affects learner access therefore transport is a similarly major issue in delivering expanded provision. Support for the additional transport costs currently comes via local ALP funding, and there is a small sparsity uplift element in the newly introduced revenue funding for the Diplomas. We have set up a cross directorate transport group to look at the specific issues surrounding the new 14-19 agenda, with a new Integrated Transport Manger post to lead research and make recommendations on a number of issues. These include mobile classrooms, use of public transport, co-ordinated timetables with other transport users, flexibuses.
- One way of overcoming disadvantage caused by rurality is to use e-learning. This has led to a wide range of projects that have been varied and imaginative. The adoption of a county wide learning 'platform' last month should aid progress in this area.
- Another factor affecting equality of access is the distribution of facilities. Traditionally, many of the best facilities for certain lines of learning e.g engineering, construction, hospitality and land based courses have been in Colleges. However two of our partnerships have no central local college. The local LSC (Learning Skills Council) and LA (Local Authority) have been working together to better align capital planning. Where provision is lacking it will be the LA's responsibility to commission new provision.
- Integral to the 14-19 agenda is the requirement to ensure all learners have access to impartial, high quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). A major part of the IAG requirement has been the development of a web based area prospectus, a DCSF requirement. This is set to make a major impact in 2008/9 and is the result of a successful joint initiative between North Yorkshire and York. The web site was launched in September 2007 and is fully operational. See <http://www.futures4menorthyorks.com>
- Next steps being developed are Individual Learning Plans and a pilot of a Common Application Process

. Quality Assurance

- We need to ensure that all partnership courses, and in particular the work related elements, deliver a common high standard of provision. Completion of a major research paper in 2007 revealed considerable variability of approach across the county. We are implementing agreed county protocols for partnership working and delivery, which includes a full updating of the Work Related Guidelines including Work Experience. To support this work we will appoint a new Quality Assurance Adviser.

Conclusion

The curriculum reform agenda continues to develop rapidly. First teaching of the Creative and Media Diploma in North Yorkshire begins in September 2008, in Ryedale. We will monitor the delivery of this Diploma very closely, in order to disseminate best practice and highlight potential issues for other ALPs when they begin teaching of the Diplomas in September 2009. We are working closely with schools and colleges to overcome the challenges that are specific to the North Yorkshire context. Above all we are very appreciative of the level of commitment shown by our colleagues in educational institutions across the county, in a climate of enormous change and development.