

Schools Forum – 18th March 2008

Report of the Director of Children's Services

14-19 Diplomas

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum of the latest developments relating to the 14-19 Diplomas and seek approval to the funding framework for the 2008/09 academic year.

Budget Working Group Discussed

2. No.

Action for Schools Forum

3. To consider the recommendation from the 14-19 Strategic Partnership in relation to the funding framework for the 2008/09 academic year.

Attachments to Report

4. None.

Ian Curnow
14-19 Partnership Manager
4th March 2008

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Purpose of Report

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Background

2. At the Schools Forum meeting on 11 December, a detailed report and verbal update was provided for Members in connection with the funding options to support distribution of the Diploma Grant in 2008/09.
3. The new requirement for Schools Forum to have representation from the 14-19 sector is now fulfilled by a representative from the 14-19 Strategic Partnership Board.
4. The 14-19 Strategic Partnership draws upon expertise from all organisations contributing to 14-19 reforms. It provides a forum for key stakeholders to discuss 14-19 policy and operational activity and to provide advice to other individuals and groups as appropriate. Its membership is as follows:
 - At least one representative nominated from each of the five 14-19 consortia

Representatives from:

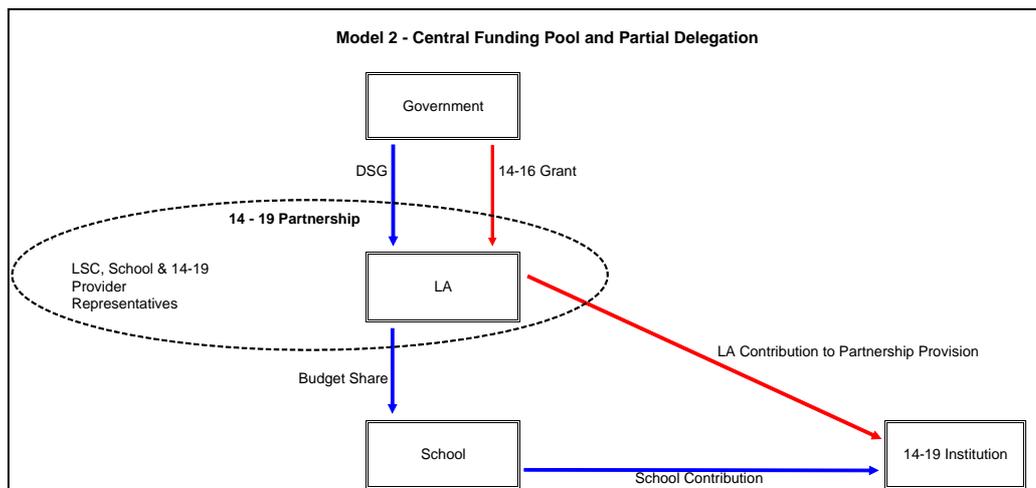
- BC Connexions
- Black Country LSC
- Black Country Training Group
- Dudley Chamber of Commerce
- Dudley Education Business Partnership
- Dudley LA 14-19 office
- Each of the four post 16 Dudley colleges
- Prospects Ltd
- Secondary head forum and special school head forum

- The voluntary sector

- At the December meeting the report detailed information relating to the Diploma Funding Model for 2008/9 identifying three options. Schools Forum resolved 'that the proposed strategy for funding the reforms in the 2008/09 financial year, as set out in Option 2 in Annex 2 of Appendix A to the report submitted, be supported in principle, pending the submission of further information and more detailed proposals to the next meeting of the Forum'.
- The 14-19 Strategic Partnership which met on 31 January 2008 has now recommended that for the academic year 2008/09 that the Diploma Grant is distributed through option 2 (partial delegation) as portrayed below. This is in line with the resolution of Schools Forum in December 2007, as detailed in paragraph 5.

7. Funding Option 2 – Central Funding Pool and Partial Delegation

	Option 1 (Insurance)	Option 2 (Partial delegation)	Option 3 (Pay as you go)
Advantage	Certainty about costs and budgets for schools	Certainty about budgets for schools	Maximum funding in school budgets
Disadvantage	Less funding goes into school budgets	Uncertainty about costs for schools	Uncertainty about costs and budgets for schools



- The DCSF has now issued the 2008/09 ring fenced grant allocations for Dudley. Based on 176 learner numbers predicted by the Halesowen Partnership at Autumn 2007 the initial grant allocation is £168,239, however consortia are asked to confirm the likely numbers taking up Diploma places by line/level in their area by the end February 2008. In response to these revised estimates DCSF will adjust/confirm the final allocation for each authority by the end of March 2008.
- The DCSF guidance 18/207 defines the purpose and scope of the Diploma Formula grant. It provides dedicated funding to support the additional costs of delivering the Diplomas at KS4 which cannot be met from mainstream funding. Costs which the grant can be used to fund include:
 - those required for the direct delivery of Diplomas including additional costs

of teaching and materials incurred by institutions in planning and delivering the curriculum;

- b. costs associated with the provision of Diplomas for pupils in sparse areas including transport between providers within a Diploma consortium.”

10. A service level agreement through which to administer grant allocations between Dudley MBC and providers will make clear this payment framework. This will need to cover the DCSF terms and conditions:

- The grant is designed to provide funding for delivery in the 2008/09 academic year and pays for activity in the academic year. Payment will be made to the LA from DCSF in instalments in September 2008 and the following March 2009. In order to then make payment to providers the LA will require details of actual learner engagement for the September payment and any revision to these numbers for the March payment.
- Where actual recruitment exceeds the numbers of places confirmed by the consortium the growth over projected numbers will be funded from the grant allocation for the following year. Where under recruitment or failure to retain learners on programme is evident the grant payment will be adjusted accordingly through the March instalment.

11. As 2008/09 is the first academic year for diploma deliver, it is recommended that the funding decision for 2008/09 sets no precedent for future years and the framework is reviewed by the 14-19 Strategic Partnership for 2009/10.

12. A further update regarding progress with 2008/09 delivery, and considerations for 2009/10 delivery is recommended for the December 2008 Schools Forum meeting.

Finance

13. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DCSF through the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008.

14. Schools Forums are regulated by the School Forums Regulations 2002 as already amended by the Schools Forums (Amendment) Regulations 2004 the Schools Forums (Amendment) 2005 Regulations and the Schools Forums (Amendment) 2008 Regulations.

15. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget will be funded by a direct DCSF grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

16. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equality Impact

17. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

18. Schools Forum to:

- Support option 2 of the diploma funding model framework for the 2008/09 academic year only (paragraph 6 & 7). The model sets no precedent for future years;
- The funding framework to be reviewed by 14-19 Strategic Partnership for 2009/10 and a further recommendation to schools forum made when appropriate;
- That an update on 2008/09 progress and further finding guidance be provided to Schools Forum in December 2008.



John Freeman

Director of Children's Services

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