

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 SEPTEMBER 2008**

DEVELOPMENT OF 14-19 CURRICULUM OFFER AND NEW DIPLOMAS

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of the development of the 14 to 19 Curriculum Offer in Darlington with particular reference to Diplomas.

Summary

2. This report provides an update of progress surrounding developments in this area.

Recommendation

3. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

**Murray Rose,
Director of Children's Services**

Background Papers

DCSF guidance documents

Andrew Dunn: Extension 2824

S17 Crime and Disorder	Effective provision, commissioned locally, should ensure that there is appropriate provision for all learners. In particular, young offenders currently do not access as much provision as expected and these changes should help to improve their access to education and training.
Health and Well Being	There are no specific health and well being issues contained within this report.
Sustainability	There are no specific sustainability issues contained within this report.
Diversity	There will continue to be national and regional commissioning of specialist provision for learners with complex additional needs.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	Learners aged 14 -19 from 2009.
Budget and Policy Framework	This does not represent a change to the council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The strategic direction proposed in the report will increase the ability of the local authority to effect the delivery of the Prosperous and Aspiring themes of the

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

4. The Darlington 14-19 Trust was formed in 2004. The Trust is made up of secondary headteachers, college principals, the Local Authority, The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Connexions, employers, the Business Education Partnership and the chair of the local Work Based Learning Providers' Forum. The chair of the Trust is Jim O'Neill, Headteacher of Carmel College. A new 14-19 Strategy has been agreed by the partnership to enable the Trust to move onto the next stage of 14-19 development, and a series of development events for members of the Trust has been initiated to examine issues such as membership and the framework for collaboration.
5. The Local Authority supports the strategic and operational work of the Trust through the recently expanded 14-19 team comprising: Assistant Director School Improvement and Development, Lead Officer, 14-19 Consultant (part-time) and 14-19 Advisor for Information Advice and Guidance (IAG). There are plans to add a 14-19 Coordinator to the team in the near future.
6. A series of subgroups have been established to support the work of the Trust (including the Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) Reduction Partnership, Curriculum Group, Darlington Aimhigher Steering Group, Employer Engagement Group and Diploma Development Group). Over the past year, and in line with the new 14-19 Strategy, clear reporting structures and remits around the development of protocols for Diploma delivery have ensured that good progress has been made on development towards town-wide procedures and on Gateway submissions, the process through which Diploma submissions gain approval.
7. Through the NEET Reduction Partnership £640,000 of European Social Fund (ESF) funding has been secured to commission tailored learning packages for young people.
8. With funding from Aimhigher, the Trust has developed a successful Transition Support Programme for students moving to post-16 education at Carmel College, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Darlington College and work based learning.
9. Collaborative courses have been running successfully for a number of years, mainly between Darlington College and schools but also between school and school and between schools and QE Sixth Form College. This has been facilitated by an element of common timetabling and the provision of transport where required. The Skills + programme has been designed to address the needs of disaffected students and has been particularly successful in securing progression to post-16 education. QE Sixth Form College has focused on provision for gifted and talented students in schools with the development of programmes such as AS level Critical Thinking. (Narrowing the gap between higher and lower performing schools is a priority in overcoming barriers to the further expansion of collaborative activity.)
10. Whilst continuing to offer GCSEs and A levels as free-standing qualifications the 14 to 19 Trust are developing a significant new range of qualifications for the 14-19 phase which are designed to bridge the gap between vocational and academic education. The new 14-19 Diplomas are widely recognised as the most important change to the country's qualification

system in a generation.

11. Developed across all the major sectors of the economy, the new Diplomas are intended to secure a fully-rounded education for all young people at all levels of ability motivated and engaged by learning related to the world of work.
12. We have worked with local stakeholders in designing the new Diplomas, so that each Diploma secures the right underpinning knowledge for each sector of today's economy. Each Diploma is also designed to prepare young people fully to move into the adult world by locking into the basics so that no young person can achieve a Diploma without mastering functional English, maths and ICT. An extended project, embedded personal skills development and a work experience requirement also help to develop the broader range of personal skills, competencies and attitudes vital for work and further study.
13. The development of Diplomas is a central plank of the proposals set out in recent government reform designed to galvanise the whole education system to engage every young person, by raising the compulsory participation age to 18. Making sure that every young person is able to take a programme of learning that is motivating and valuable is essential for successful implementation of these proposals. It is hoped that raising the participation age will give every young person the best chance to gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they will need to find and stay in employment, and excel and progress in their career.
14. Darlington will deliver 4 Diplomas from September 2009 (IT, Creative and Media, Engineering and Hospitality and Catering) Construction and the Built Environment will be delivered from September 2010. We will make further submissions to deliver other Diploma lines.
15. All Diploma lines covering all the major sectors of the economy will be available for first teaching from 2010 with all Diplomas being universally available for all 14-19 year olds from 2013.
16. The Trust is investigating developing a Skills Centre to supplement 14-16 provision. Money from LSC has facilitated this investigation. Such a centre will further support work to reduce exclusions, widen the curriculum offer, facilitate progression pathways, raise aspirations and promote progression to post-16 education and training. It will provide a centre of excellence for delivery of the diploma lines for all Darlington young people.
17. An electronic area-wide 14-19 Prospectus has been developed to show all courses available to 14-19 year olds in the area. There is further work to do on the Prospectus to ensure that the information shown is comprehensive. The Prospectus will be rolled out to students from September 2008 as part of a programme of guidance on Diplomas, the wider curriculum and learner entitlement.
18. An event was held in the summer term to bring together student representatives from all providers to consult on 14-19 issues such as the learner entitlement prior to the re-launch from September 2008.
19. We are working closely with partners in Connexions Service to ensure that all Darlington Young People receive appropriate Independent Advice and Guidance as regards the path they choose through the education system post 14.

20. In order to progress the Machinery of Government changes, groupings of local authorities need to identify how they intend to work together to commission 14-19 provision within their area(s). This is a two stage process, with the first stage being a short statement of intent and the second stage being a more comprehensive proposal. At present the 5 Tees Valley local authorities have drafted their statement of intent in the form of a Multi Area Agreement to collaborate, which must be submitted to the DCSF by September 26th 2008.
21. The DCSF are considering developing a national funding formula for 14 to 19 provision so ensuring equity of funding across the country.
22. The Local Authority's 14 to 19 Development Plan sets out our timeline for future development and is appended to this report.

Outcome of Consultation

23. Consultation has and will continue to take place with a variety of stakeholders, including schools, colleges, employers, the community, young people and families across the Borough and the Tees Valley.
-