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For Immediate Release

Have your say about post-16 education in Gosport

People in Gosport will have an opportunity to help shape future post-16 education in the area if consultation plans get the go ahead next week.

Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Children's Services and Deputy Leader, Councillor Roy Perry, will be asked to approve consultation on the future pattern of provision for post-16 education in the area at his decision day on 17 November.

Under legislation passed in the Apprenticeships, Children, Schools and Learning Act, the County Council was given responsibility for ensuring sufficient provision exists to meet the educational and training needs of local young people in the 16-18 age group from April of this year.

Currently, post-16 education is provided by a variety of schools, colleges and training providers in the Gosport area including St Vincent College, Fareham College, Bay House School and Fareport Training, as well as other local providers offering work-based learning.

The County Council is working with schools, colleges, training providers and the local community to determine the pattern for future provision. Consultations would help establish the best way forward to ensure the long-term provision of high quality training and education to meet young people's requirements and to enable them to gain the skills needed for the current and future employment market.

Any proposals would also be expected to increase young people's participation in learning and further reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training.

Local post-16 providers have indicated they welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues and look forward to playing a key role in the consultation process if the proposals get the go ahead.

If the plans are approved consultations would take place between November 2010 and the end of January 2011. As well as local people those consulted would include governors and staff of secondary schools and colleges, students, local councillors, local MPs and MEPs, borough, county and city councils, trades unions, community groups, the local children's partnership, private sector post-16 education and training providers, the Young People's Learning Agency and Skills Funding Agency. Consultation would also be undertaken with local business organisations. For more information go to www.hants.gov.uk/gosportpost16consultations

A report on the feedback from the consultations would be brought back to the Council and any preferred option identified would then be the subject of more detailed consultation as well as further consideration by the individual colleges and schools.

Councillor Perry said: “Hampshire County Council now has a responsibility to ensure there is sustainable and robust post-16 education and training which meets the needs of all young people and provides them with a variety of training and learning opportunities. In addition to this the County Council also has a duty to ensure south Hampshire has a skilled workforce to enable it to prosper. It is with these tasks in mind that I will be considering the recommendations very carefully next week and making my decision regarding the carrying out of consultations on the provision of post-16 education in Gosport.

“If I do give the go ahead for the consultations we would want to hear from all elements of the community from students and staff at local schools and colleges through to training providers and local business organisations.”

ENDS

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