

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	6 June 2011
Title:	Post-16 education in the Gosport area: Development of a preferred option
Reference:	2941
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Following approval to undertake a consultation on the future organisation of post-16 education in Gosport (Report reference 1648, 17 November 2010), and responses to that consultation, this report seeks approval to move forward with the process by setting out a number of key principles around which a preferred option for the future organisation of post 16 education may be developed.
- 1.2. If approved, the County Council will facilitate a project group made up of the key local parties. The project group will be tasked with developing a preferred option around the key principle outline in section 4 by December 2011, with the ambition to commence implementation from April 2012.
- 1.3. Dependent on the precise nature and scope of the preferred option developed by the project group, further approvals are likely to be required ahead of full implementation, including consideration by independent governing bodies, external bodies and government departments.
- 1.4 Any resource requirement associated with the preferred option and its implementation, including financial, will need to be fully assessed as part of any subsequent approval process. If approved, the immediate resource requirement, including the facilitation of the proposed project group, would be met from within the department's existing resources.

2. Statutory, policy and local context

- 2.1 Section 15ZA of the Education Act 1996, as inserted by section 41 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, states that:

“A local education authority in England must secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of —

(a) persons in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, and;

(b) persons in their area who are aged 19 or over but under 25 and are subject to learning difficulty assessment.”

- 2.2 The decision of the Secretary of State in July 2010 to transfer responsibility for post-16 funding, other than school 6th forms, from local authorities to the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) does not detract from what the Local Government Association has recently referred to as a “strong, strategic role [for local authorities] in overseeing the education and training offered in their local area” (LGA media release 20 July 2010).
- 2.3 The passing of the Education Bill currently before Parliament, anticipated by the end of the calendar year 2011, will amend the County Council’s statutory duties, post-16, and remove responsibilities relating to post-16 commissioning, funding and performance management. As ‘strategic commissioner’ the County Council will retain a statutory duty relating to sufficiency of (high quality) provision, post-16, to support the raising of the participation age to 18 by 2015. This, along with the County Council’s wider commitment to the Hampshire community, continues to provide a legitimate basis on which to bring forward these proposals.
- 2.4 The Coalition Government’s education policy, including that relating to post-16 education, is premised on the principle that independent institutions are best place to determine the curriculum offer and educational character of their institutions. To facilitate this, they are to be afforded the independence to determine how best to utilise their resources as well as what partnership arrangements best serve the need of their institution, its learners and wider community. Hampshire County Council recognises this policy construct and that any preferred option can only be developed on the basis of full consensus.
- 2.5 The review process being undertaken by Hampshire County Council also serves as a response to Gosport Borough Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s report on post-16 vocational education within the borough. This concluded that the identified deficiency in the skills level of the wider Gosport community, including attainment at 16 and 19, combined with the limited supply of high quality skills provision in Gosport, presented a major barrier to future economic growth and social cohesion. The report calls upon the County Council to take urgent action to address the problem. Further, the committee noted that as the scrutiny process went forward, they became “increasingly aware of the difficulty of examining post-16 vocational education in isolation from educational provision in general and 14-19 vocational provision in particular...” (Para 2.7 of report approved by Gosport Borough Council on 31 March 2010).
- 2.6 The report of the 17 November 2010 (section 2.5) commented that contact with local schools and colleges had highlighted the following priorities in relation to post-16 provision:
- ensuring good quality, coherent post-16 provision throughout the area
 - increasing post-16 participation, particularly in target wards where historical participation levels have been significant below local and regional averages

- increasing the number of students remaining in Gosport to continue their post-16 studies rather than travel out of the borough
- further reducing the number of Gosport young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs), which stood at 6.4%/150 young people, 16-18, at the end of March 2011.
- determine the investment model for capital funding in post-14 skills facilities within the borough

The consultation process has underlined the above priorities as remaining relevant alongside other key issues, including;

- sustainability of provision across the area to support the raising of the participation age, providing both scale and value in the context of a reducing demographic and a reduction in post 16 unit funding
- the impact of the introduction of new targeted post 16 learner support policies, including the withdrawal of the EMA and anticipated reduction in transport funding
- the preference to develop a collaborative solution, led by local partners

2.7 The report of the 17 November 2010 recognised the absolute interdependency between the development of high quality provision for young people and the need for a sustainable adult learning offer to support individual skills development, community cohesion and economic prosperity. This recognition is reflected in the principles by which a preferred option is to be developed

3 Summary of the responses received from the consultation on the future organisation of post-16 education in Gosport

3.1 The consultation process ran from 18 November 2010 to 28 January 2011. In total, 12 formal responses were received.

3.2 The majority of the responses supported the review process being undertaken by Hampshire County Council. There was recognition of the challenges to be addressed and a broad consensus around the headline priorities set out in the report of the 17 November 2010. Of note is that the majority of respondents expressed, either through the response or separately, a desire and willingness to work with the County Council and other parties to contribute to the development of a sustainable solution.

3.2 Responses were received from the following organisations

Organisation	Key comments
St Vincent College	<p>Preference to develop a formal collaboration/federation and joint governance between all post-14 providers.</p> <p>Investment on the St Vincent site to develop vocational facilities to meet</p>

	<p>need</p> <p>Delivery of some post-16 provision in the two 11-16 schools and collaborative delivery for minority A level subjects with Bay House sixth form</p> <p>Potential for development of a UTC for specialist engineering provision. Sponsored by the Federation and working with other partners such as Portsmouth University and the Royal Navy</p>
<p>Fareham College</p>	<p>Preference for a type B (single dissolution of St Vincent) merger. Establishment of a new single FE corporation with campuses in Fareham and Gosport . St Vincent site sold and assets used to fund a new build vocational centre in Gosport</p> <p>Potential for the new organisation to sponsor the development of a UTC in Gosport, specialising in engineering or construction. Possibly through the redesignation of a local 11-16 school.</p>
<p>Bridgemy Community Sports College</p>	<p>Need to build on Gosport College management and leadership arrangements. Consider option to develop a vocational centre on the Bridgemy site (linked to post-14 inclusion programmes). There needs to be a mix of academic and vocational pathways available locally with option for students to access provision across provider.</p>
<p>Bay House School and Sixth Form</p>	<p>Welcome the consultation and the need to develop more vocational provision, post 16. Should build on Gosport College project i.e. a shared leadership approach including the schools. Preferred option is a single FE provider; Site/s needed in Gosport</p>
<p>Fareham & Gosport Integrated Youth Team (Connexions), Hampshire County Council (informed by direct consultation with young people from Fareham and</p>	<p>Response based on 1-1 consultation with local young people. Considered the merits and demerits of the various options. Maintaining local offer – Fareham and Gosport – key. Concluded that preferred option is a</p>

<p>Gosport)</p>	<p>collaboration/federation between post-16 providers</p>
<p>Gosport College Partnership (joint response from Fareham College, St Vincent College, Bay House School, Bridgemary School, Brune Park School, Fareport Training)</p>	<p>Currently has in place a collaborative model for developing vocational provision in Gosport. Needs to continue to be led and managed by local partners.</p> <p>Would welcome a formal structural arrangement between Fareham and St Vincent colleges to ensure a financially viable and sustainable post-16 provider.</p> <p>Future development of provision (11-19) could then be taken forward by an Executive of the schools and post-16 providers</p>
<p>Gosport Borough Council</p>	<p>High quality vocational training facilities are crucial to achieving the economic development needed in Gosport</p> <p>Local providers need to work together to address the lack of vocational provision. Gosport College is welcomed, but is limited and not considered sustainable.</p> <p>Preferred option is investment in developing more vocational provision at St Vincent.</p>
<p>Highbury College</p>	<p>Solution needs to be collaborative, led by Gosport providers (pre and post-16) and focused on St Vincent.</p> <p>Must be sustainable; likely to require structural change; could include a federation of all providers, or the introduction of a studio school.</p> <p>Highbury willing to work in partnership with Gosport providers to help develop capacity for vocational curriculum.</p>
<p>Wessex Sixth Form Colleges Partnership</p>	<p>Support the establishment of a Federation of local providers.</p> <p>Preferred option is to develop facilities at St Vincent to meet the identified need for more vocational training,</p> <p>Is important to maintain a local sixth</p>

	form college in the area.
Sixth Form College Forum	Support the establishment of a federation of local providers. Preferred option is to develop curriculum and facilities at St Vincent to meet the identified need for more vocational training. Structural change is not necessary.
Motiv8	Need a partnership and collaborative approach between statutory and voluntary sector and the local community in order to engage hard to reach learners.
Gosport Resident (adult learner and parent of FE College student)	Supports the need for more vocational provision in Gosport. Should be through investment and development of the offer at St Vincent. More opportunities for adult learning also needed.

- 3.3 In summary, the responses indicated broad agreement to the priorities outlined in the report of November 2010 and highlighted that any future solution must be based on effective collaboration. All respondents identified the need to develop more high-quality vocational provision in Gosport to support post 14/post 16 participation, progression and attainment. A number of respondents believed this would be best achieved by investment on the site occupied by St Vincent College. To ensure future viability and sustainability, responses indicated a preference to implement formal collaborative arrangements, particularly between the two main FE providers serving Gosport, St Vincent College and Fareham College. This could take the form of formal federation or be achieved through the creation of a new FE corporation. To support the development of vocational skills, post 14, there was support for the development of a 14-19 technical provider in Gosport, which could take the form of a University Technical College.
- 3.4 In addition to the above responses, the County Council has also met directly with representatives of the Royal Navy (RN), both at Naval Command, Whale Island, and HMS Sultan. The RN has a significant technical training capacity in Gosport, including an extensive Apprenticeship offer. As part of its commitment to the wider community, the RN has expressed a desire to be actively engaged in the review process and to contribute to the development of a preferred option.
- 3.5 Through the RN's engagement in the process there exists an opportunity to inform the MOD's current 'Defence Technical Training Change Programme'. This is reviewing the technical training capacity of the Armed Services, including that located in South Hampshire, against future

requirements and resource availability. A further opportunity exists, therefore, for the preferred option developed by the project group to directly support the outcome of the MOD's programme and its implementation.

Principles to underpin the development of a preferred option

- 4.1 On the basis of the responses received to the consultation it is proposed that the following principles are used underpin the development of a preferred option for the future organisation of post-16 education in Gosport:
- That the preferred option should be developed on the basis of **collaboration**, recognising that independent institutions are consenting to collaborate to bring about a sustainable solution that will benefit all young people and the wider community in Gosport
 - That the preferred option must provide a basis for the **expansion of high quality technical and vocational education at all levels**, affording more young people the option to undertake their studies in Gosport. This will include expanding local capacity to deliver Apprenticeships for young people and adults.
 - That the preferred option will address the future technical skills requirements of Gosport and wider South Hampshire economy, prioritising STEM subject areas and the marine and associated sectors. This could include the development of a 14-19 **Gosport University Technical College (UTC)** as a strategic development of the Gosport College initiative, supported by capital investment from Hampshire County Council. A lead HE partner and sector employer(s) should be identified.
 - That in developing a curriculum model that supports young people's choice to participate locally, post 16, the preferred option should ensure the **sustainability of the offer**, providing both scale and value in the context of a reducing demographic and a reduction in post 16 unit funding
 - That **formal collaborative and structural arrangements are developed between the two local FE Colleges**. The proposed form of collaboration will be determined through the project group and will support the development of a coherent FE offer operating from facilities across both districts.
 - Creating a local infrastructure that will support the delivery of a accessible and relevant **adult skills and community learning** programme
- 4.2 Hampshire County Council proposes to establish project group to take forward the development of a preferred option. Key local parties will be invited to form the group, including all members of the Gosport College executive. A condition of membership will be that the party commits to the development of a preferred option based on all of the key principals outlined above. The first task of the project group will be to develop terms of reference.

- 4.3 The County Council initially proposed to appoint an independent Chair to facilitate the project group. However, local partners have expressed a preference that County Council Officers facilitate the group. This will be resourced from within existing budgets.
- 4.4 If approved, the project group would commence from June 2011 and be required to submit a report detailing the preferred option to the County Council by January 2012. An interim report will be formally presented to members.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Hampshire County Council's consultation into post-16 education has identified a broad consensus around the need to develop a collaborative and sustainable solution for the future organisation of post-16 education in Gosport that will increase access to high quality vocational and technical provision, in turn improving participation, progression and attainment.
- 5.2 If approved, the County Council will facilitate a project group, made up of local parties, to be tasked with developing a preferred option around the principles identified through the consultation process.
- 5.3 If approved, the project group will be required to submit a detailed report containing the preferred option by December 2011 with an interim report to be formally presented to members. Subject to the nature a scope of the preferred option, further approvals are likely to be required.

9 Recommendation(s)

That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services be asked to approve:

- the principles that will underpin the development of a preferred option for the future organisation of post-16 education in Gosport
- the establishment of a project group to develop the preferred option, reporting back in December 2011 with the ambition to commence implementation from April 2012