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The following report is an Information Item for the Education Scrutiny Committee:

- 1 Post 16 Collaboration Arrangements.



INFORMATION REPORT FOR EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 24TH FEBRUARY 2020

SUBJECT: POST 16 COLLABORATION ARRANGEMENTS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress made to date in relation to the post-16 aspects of the Post-16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Review underway within the County Borough.
- 1.2 Members are asked to provide any comments to the author of the report prior to its presentation to Cabinet on 26th February 2020. The report seeks approval from Cabinet to procure and implement the required IT packages that will enhance and support students as they progress toward Post 16 Education and allocate additional funding to resource the review

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Cabinet have established a Review Board to oversee the review of Post-16 Provision, Single Sex Education and Surplus Places across Caerphilly.
- 2.2 The report provides Members with an update as to the current position of the review with a specific focus on the Post 16 element.
- 2.3 While the work of the Board is to develop long term sustainable solutions to the challenges of Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places across Caerphilly, it has identified an opportunity to improve the current provision of post-16 education in the Borough in the short term by refining and enhancing the nature of the collaborations that already exist across Upper Rhymney and the Caerphilly Basin secondary schools.
- 2.4 Secondary school partnerships have been in place in the Caerphilly North (Upper Rhymney Valley Consortium – Heolddu, Idris Davies 3-18, Lewis Girls and Lewis School Pengam) and Caerphilly Basin (Bedwas, St Cenydd and St Martins) areas for a number of years. The Board have identified the potential for these partnerships to be strengthened through a formal partnership agreement and the establishment of a management board that could ensure effective delivery. The arrangement also has the potential to provide students with access to a broader curriculum and improve the overall costs and outcomes at Post 16.

- 2.5 A lead LA Officer is supporting both partnerships in helping to make the necessary changes and the new arrangement is on course to be introduced at the start of the academic year 2020-21.
- 2.6 In the meantime the Review Board will move forward with discussions on the longer term issues of Post 16, Surplus Places and Single Sex Education. The review of the secondary school estate in the Caerphilly Basin and Caerphilly North and the place of post-16 provision within that will be the focus of the next meeting of the Review Board on 31 January 2020.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
 - a) note the information contained in the report
 - b) approve the use of £48k of Education and Corporate Services retained underspend reserve to purchase and implement the required IT systems to support the enhanced arrangements. This would procure the system for 2 years for all 12 Secondary Schools
 - c) approve the use of £10k of Education and Corporate Services retained underspend reserve to extend the lead LA Officer until 31st March 2021.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Members are updated on the progress of the 6th Form, Single Sex and Surplus Places review, that the proposals to enhance existing collaborations can benefit from tailored IT solutions and that funding is available to resource the review over an extended timeframe.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The key aims of the 21st Century Schools and Education Band B investment programme, outlined by WG, is to:
 - Reduce the number of poor condition schools.
 - Ensure that we have the right size schools in the right location, providing enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education.
 - Ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate for use by both Schools and the wider Community.
- 5.2 Cabinet agreed on 13th March 2019 for a Board to be established to undertake a review of Sixth Form/Single Sex/Surplus Places provision. The Board would consist of Scrutiny Members, Unions, Governor Representatives, Colleges, Headteachers, EAS, Education officers and Cabinet Member.

5.3 Since its establishment the Board has met on a number of occasions and has agreed key priorities for the delivery of future sixth form provision as:

- Best outcomes for learners
- A rich and varied curriculum
- Inclusivity
- Vocational / academic parity
- Retaining as many learners as possible in high quality Post 16 Educational provision.

The group is working towards meeting these key priorities in both the short and the long term.

5.4 The Board recognised that many of the possible long term solutions discussed would take some years to bring to fruition. The ideas would also benefit from being developed in the context of the wider 21st Century Schools Programme. However, it was also recognised that more immediate short term solutions were needed in order to improve the current provision of post-16 education in the County's sixth forms.

These include:

- Marketing the two current sixth-form partnerships as a single entity and re-branding with new partnership sixth-form logos for the Caerphilly Basin Partnership and the Upper Rhymney Valley Partnership.
- Development of a single on-line prospectus for each partnership to include individual partnership website.
- Both partnerships to establish Strategic Management Boards consisting of Chairs of Governors and Headteachers.
- Headteachers to form operational Management Groups and below them the senior curriculum leads and heads of sixth form will work in operational Implementation Groups. Each group will have a detailed remit and calendared meetings throughout the year
- One important aspect being developed is that of consistency. The existing partnerships of schools will design a range of policies and practices that will be in alignment across each partnership. These include areas such as:
 - A memorandum of understanding that commits the schools to the formalise partnership arrangements signed off by Chairs of Governors and Headteachers
 - A partnership handbook that sets out the detail for:
 - Common options processes with Year 11
 - A consistent approach to impartial advice and guidance including the use of the latest digital platforms (£48,000 for all 12 Secondary Schools including those without 6th form provision for a 2 year pilot)
 - A common on-line prospectus
 - A common induction process
 - Consistent approaches to target-setting with the students in the sixth form, tracking their progress and reporting to parents
 - A clear timetable for UCAS

- Curriculum and financial planning cycles to be built into academic calendars
- A fresh approach to financial planning designed to focus on the affordability of course provision
- A more robust approach to the planning of provision
- A fresh approach to quality assuring the sixth-form provision
- The expansion of the ALPS (Advanced Level Performance System) value add support system which is beyond the remit of the EAS support contract.

- 5.5 These developments are intended to be implemented as soon as possible and be in place no later than the start of the academic year 2020-21.
- 5.6 In the meantime, the Review Board will move forward with discussions on the longer term issues of surplus places and single sex education. The review of the Secondary School estate in the Caerphilly Basin and Caerphilly North and the place of post-16 provision within that were the focus of the recent meeting of the Review Board that took place on 31st January 2020.
- 5.7 Cabinet agreed on 30th January 2019 an allocation of £64,000 to provide additional resource to support the review. The allocation of a further £10,000 at this point would enable this support to be extended until the end of the 2020/21 financial year providing extended input from the lead LA Officer at a critical time in the Review.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 It is assumed that the cost of the 2 year pilot of the online digital platform will not exceed £48,000. This will be subject to a procurement exercise, however current projections indicate that this amount will be sufficient.
- 6.2 As the changes are an enhancement of existing collaborative practices which are currently managed by the Schools, it is expected that the Schools will continue to manage the new arrangements as well as any communication and engagement with potential Post 16 learners and their families that is required.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

- 7.1 Caerphilly's Shared Ambitions Strategy: To raise standards and ensure our learners are healthy, confident, proud and ambitious and can access high quality educational opportunities, settings and experience.
- 7.2 Caerphilly's Wellbeing Objectives 2018 to 2023. This proposal will assist the Authority in meeting these objectives in particular the following:
Well-being Objective 1 – Improve Education opportunities for all.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 The Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, working with people and communities, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:
- A prosperous Wales.
 - A resilient Wales.
 - A healthier Wales.
 - A more equal Wales.
 - A Wales of cohesive communities.
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
 - A globally responsible Wales.
- 8.2 The Act sets out the sustainable development principle against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. In using the sustainable development principle it is incumbent that the authority considers the whole of the population it serves and considers the effect of its actions on future generations. The principle, also known as the five ways of working is assessed below:
- **Long Term** – Forecasting of pupil numbers has been utilised to identify the demand for 6th form places to ensure sufficient Educational places in our schools. The formalisation of the current partnerships will support schools providing sustainable 6th form delivery that will provide the creation of a highly skilled and ambitious workforce of the future for Caerphilly.
 - **Prevention** – Maximising the opportunities for learners to reach their full potential through the most appropriate route should increase the likelihood of those learners going on to secure long term employment and becoming self-reliant.
 - **Integration** – Regardless of the outcome, the review will enhance the working relationships and integration of the Local Education Authority, Schools and local Colleges to the benefit of Caerphilly's learners.
 - **Collaboration** – The formalisation of the partnership will strengthen the collaboration already taking place in our schools.
 - **Involvement** – The Review Board comprises of a wide representation of stakeholders and broader consultation with students, parents, governors, Head Teachers and other interested parties forming a core component of the review work.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no Equality implications arising from the report as this is an extension of existing arrangements.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The anticipated funding requirements are set out as follows with the recommendation seeking to support this from Education and Corporate Services retained underspend reserve:
- £48,000 for the implementation of an online digital platform in order to provide licensed use by all staff and pupils for all secondary schools in the Authority for two years. A benefits appraisal would be undertaken half way through the pilot programme to analyse the impact this has had on relevant parties. Following the 2 year period the expectation would be for individual schools to meet the annual cost which is expected to be in the region of £2,000 per school. The actual cost and provider will be subject to a procurement process.
 - Cabinet agreed on 30th January 2019 an allocation of £64,000 to provide additional resource to support the review. The allocation of a further £10,000 at this point would enable this support to be extended until the end of the 2020/21 financial year providing extended input from the lead LA Officer at a critical time in the Review.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There is no specific Personnel implication directly resulting from the report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

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Background Papers: Cabinet Report 13th March 2019 – Terms of Reference for Review of Post 16/Single Sex and Surplus Places.
Cabinet Report 30th January 2019 – Update on Reserves.

Appendix 1 18 key priorities.

Appendix 1

18 + Initial key priorities identified by the Review Board Teaching and Learning

Theme	Star rating
Best outcomes for all learners	12
Highest possible standards	11
Retention of the best teachers – value experience	10
Curriculum	
Theme	Star rating
Rich and varied curriculum	15
Support for Learners (<i>and families</i>)	
Theme	Star rating
Practical support for vulnerable learners e.g. LAC, wellbeing	13
Impartial career advice	12
Strong and common IT/online provision borough wide	11
Learning environment and study facilities	
Theme	Star rating
Organisation of learning space:	26
Digitally enabled learning environment (high speed, operative across the estate, supporting mobility); learning should be portable, travelling with the learners; good quality access to digital facilities	18
Specialist resources/facilities e.g. vocational such as cars/walls/railway tracks or a theatre	11
Inclusivity	
Theme	Star rating
High quality supported transitions	8
Recruitment/retention/progression/destinations	
Theme	Star rating
Clear pathways to post-16 education including raising the value of vocational education	17
Maintaining as many learners in high quality post-16 education	13
Standards	
Theme	Star rating
Vocational/academic parity/balance	15
Protecting choice in the face of the standards agenda	12
Value-added – ensuring it is meaningful and refined	11
Student outcomes	
Theme	Star rating
Transition to high quality employment	22
Clear pathways to higher education, apprenticeships and further education and linking these with ALN and FSM	17

PLUS - Value for money