

Bridgend County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr



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Post 16 Operational Board Final Report

September 2017

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Post 16 Operational Board

A report on the review undertaken into the future of post-16 provisions in Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) June 2016 to June 2017

1. Purpose of the report

This report provides feedback to the Strategic Review Board (SRB) on the work of the Post 16 Operational Board. This work was defined in the SRB project brief with key objectives as set out in sections 4 and 5 below. Having undertaken the project brief the Post 16 Operational Board is reporting on its findings and in this report makes recommendations to the SRB on the future direction of post 16 provisions across BCBC.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/ other corporate priorities

The work covered by this report is linked to **Priority One – “Supporting a successful economy”** in the BCBC Corporate Plan for 2016-2020. The work is identified as a key project designed to deliver on Priority One and is stated as:-

“Strategic Review of Post 16 Education and Training - a strategic review to evaluate education provision and curriculum delivery with Bridgend College to ensure that there are clear options available to provide the best possible opportunities for learners in Bridgend.”

Furthermore this is amplified in the 2017-18 update to:

“Complete the review into the curriculum and schools estates for primary, secondary and Post-16 education and begin consultation on the proposals, where required, with all stakeholders.”

3. Background

3.1 In 2011 BCBC in partnership with its secondary schools developed, in response to Welsh Government’s (WG) Transformation agenda, a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) to take forward post 16 education in the borough. The case was made to develop a collaborative and distributed tertiary model whereby close partnership arrangements would be developed through clusters of schools and also across the whole post 16 network including the FE college. Significant use was made of BCBC’s 14 -19 grant to support these developments and in particular to provide a transport budget that enabled learners to move between schools as well as the college to pursue shared subjects.

- 3.2 In 2013 Welsh Government asked BCBC to review the position of post 16 provision and the progress made under the SOC. BCBC agreed terms of reference with WG and commissioned Tribal to undertake the review. A copy of that report finalised in December 2013 is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.3 Tribal noted the improvements in access to a wide range of subjects, the ability of schools to meet the requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure and an increase in the numbers of learners accessing partnership courses. Some efficiency savings were recognised alongside rationalisation of minority subjects. Participation rates were seen to be improving slowly but there was little impact seen on the quality of provision.
- 3.4 Among the concerns raised by Tribal were that this “distributed tertiary model” produced a slower rate of change in the anticipated outcomes and there was a need to provide a more comprehensive progression offer for learners with additional learning needs (ALN). Anxiety was expressed over the impact of transport costs if the burden of these fell on school budgets and the need for better quality impartial advice and guidance.
- 3.5 The Tribal review makes reference to a number of other reports related to post 16 provision in BCBC and proposed an action plan for the Partnership Steering Group (PSG – the borough’s 14-19 Strategic Group) to take forward. The action plan was only partially implemented.
- 3.6 In 2015, in response to changing policy and funding conditions the Schools Task Group received a further report from the PSG. This is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.7 In 2016 the Director for Education and Family Support established a Strategic Review Board (SRB) with this key objective:
- “A strategic review is required to evaluate education provision and curriculum delivery across Bridgend County Borough including with Bridgend College, and to determine the future direction needed by means of an options appraisal and the recommendation of a preferred option.”*
- 3.8 A review of post 16 provisions across BCBC was one of the workstreams established and a Post 16 Operational Board was created to oversee this work and generate a report for the SRB. This report is the culmination of the Post 16 Board’s work to date.

4. The key objectives for the SRB post 16 workstream

The following points are set out in the SRB project brief:-

- 4.1 Co-design post 16 education provision with stakeholders.

- 4.2 Evaluate the impact of the post 16 plans for education.
Identify any opportunities for any advantageous service reconfiguration.
- 4.3 Establish and drive forward a strategic approach to post 16 education provision
Measurable: Researching a series of models to be presented during workshops with the operational board. These will then be appraised and presented as proposal options.
- 4.4 A new Post 16 model with demonstrable efficiencies and value for money in the delivery of post 16 education services.

5. The agreed terms of reference / outputs for the post 16 Operational Board

The following outputs were set out in the terms of reference provided for and agreed by the Post 16 Operational Board:-

To develop a sustainable strategy on behalf of the local authority for post 16 education which is signed off by all stakeholders and which will inform future planning. Specifically it will:

- 5.1 Establish and drive forward a strategic approach to post 16 education provision in BCBC.
- 5.2 Co-design post 16 education provision with stakeholders.
- 5.3 Evaluate the impact of the post 16 plans for education.
- 5.4 Identify any opportunities for any advantageous service re-configuration including assessing the implications for other stakeholders.
- 5.5 Assess the implications of any proposals and advise the strategic board of those potential implications.
- 5.6 To have an agreed 'whole system' approach.
- 5.7 To apply the agreed assumptions.
- 5.8 To ensure timely completion of every project milestones.
- 5.9 To apply a project structure and project plan to the project.
- 5.10 To maintain open lines of communication to stakeholders especially headteachers as the work progresses.

6 Representation on the Post 16 Operational Board

A wide range of stakeholders were invited to become members of the board including headteachers from community, voluntary aided, Welsh-medium and Special secondary schools; the principal and vice-principal of Bridgend FE College; a range of senior managers from BCBC covering school improvement, finance, legal, HR, regeneration, school modernisation, inclusion, property services, family support services; Central South Consortium; Welsh Government; Careers Wales; National Training Federation for Wales.

7 Timescales

The Post 16 Operational Board was convened on 6 June 2016 and met at approximately monthly intervals to 13 June 2017.

8 Changes in the post 16 environment since the publication of previous reports

- 8.1 Increasing financial pressures and a reduction in post 16 funding to Bridgend from WG; this is due to a combination of lower demographics and cuts to WG grants. Secondary schools are finding it increasingly difficult to set a balanced budget with a rise in the number of deficit budgets. A number of school sixth forms have difficulty in meeting delivery costs from their post grant allocation putting pressure on cross-phase budget subsidy.
- 8.2 The introduction of the revised Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) into all 6th forms. Currently this is compulsory in seven out of nine 6th forms and will be universally adopted in all mainstream 6th forms by September 2017. The revised WBQ requires curriculum time and is impacting on the number of subjects taken by learners and as a consequence creates pressure on the ability to maintain viable groups in minority subjects. This is exacerbating a situation where a number of minority subjects such as Modern Languages and Music are already finding it challenging to create viable teaching groups.
- 8.3 The loss of a specific 14-19 grant. WG has merged a number of grants, including the 14-19 grant, into a single Education Improvement Grant (EIG) which is managed through Central South Consortium and delegated to schools. This means that all the transport costs that underpin collaborative courses are now met by the individual schools. This creates additional pressure on school finances as anticipated in the Tribal report (see section 6.1.5)
- 8.4 A reduction in support from Careers Wales as a result of budget cuts from WG. This places a greater reliance on school staff to provide impartial

careers advice and guidance. This was noted by Estyn as the weakest area of learner support in schools (Estyn remit report on learner support, May 2014) with school staff lacking expertise and current knowledge and institutional self-interest being areas of concern. A number of schools have utilised training sessions by Careers Wales to upskill school staff.

- 8.5 There has been a reduction in cluster partnership activity with greater reliance on the common X and Y daytime options and subjects offered in twilight at Bridgend College. There are lower numbers of learners engaged in daytime collaborative courses but the twilight course numbers have been holding up.
- 8.6 There has been a reduction in the level 1 and 2 vocational provision with Bridgend College no longer providing the Vocational A and B options. This was due to a decrease in numbers recruiting to these courses with fewer of these learners remaining in 6th form settings but instead moving to FE College at the end of Year 11. This has had an impact on the breadth of provision available to learners with additional learning needs (ALN) who choose to remain in school-based post 16 settings.
- 8.7 BCBC has introduced the Alps value-added system into all settings delivering level 3 courses. This has enabled schools to get a clearer picture on the quality of subject delivery in their own settings, across BCBC providers and in comparison with providers across the UK. The Alps report for Bridgend is available online in meetings and is listed as Appendix 3.
- 8.8 New partnership developments have been introduced, specifically the Penybont 6th Form College which is a collaboration between Pencoed Comprehensive and Bridgend College.
- 8.9 Significant reduction in the number of young people leaving Year 11 and not engaged in education, training or employment. The figure for BCBC is the lowest yet and stands at 1.5% of the cohort, 0.5% below the all Wales average. Through the combined efforts of schools, BCBC learner support services and Bridgend College this places BCBC 6th out of the Welsh LAs up from 17th last year.

9. The current situation

The current education provision for 16-18 year olds in Bridgend is as follows:

- 9.1 6th forms present in each secondary school varying in size from 76 to 377 (Jan. 2017 PLASC) delivering predominantly A levels
- 9.2 6th forms present in the two Special schools with approximately 40 in each

- 9.3 Bridgend College and Pencoed Comprehensive working in partnership to develop Penybont 6th Form College
- 9.4 Bridgend College provides a range of vocational pathways for approx. 2000 learners 16-18
- 9.5 Options X and Y timetabled in common (two afternoons per week) across all nine 6th forms with around 17 collaborative subjects available – around 27 students participating in collaborative courses
- 9.6 Twilight provision at Bridgend College to deliver Law, Film Studies & Psychology to about 100 learners
- 9.7 Welsh medium provision enhanced through extensive collaboration between YGG Llangynwyd in Bridgend and YGG Llanhari in RCT
- 9.8 Some local arrangements between schools may occur, for example, Brynteg / Porthcawl and CCYD / Maesteg
- 9.9 Transport costs are met by the schools for daytime partnership courses
- 9.10 Transport costs for twilight are met by Bridgend College which registers students as part-time learners
- 9.11 Five Work-based training organisations provide 60 to 70 places on Engagement, Level 1 and Traineeship programmes for Year 11 leavers
- 9.12 A handful of Year 11 learners will go on to Foundation Apprenticeships
- 9.13 In 2015 approx. 29 learners from Year 11 went into employment

The table below is an extract from the July 2015 Post 16 options paper from the PSG (and thus reflects the views of headteachers at that time) comparing the + and – aspects of current provision. The full paper was made available to the Post 16 Board.

Positives	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The retention of 6th forms is seen as essential in some areas in response to community aspirations • Maintaining the link between 6th form students and the rest of the school, especially as role models and supporting younger learners • 6th forms add to the overall ethos of the school • Perceived as popular with parents, staff, students, governors • Some schools believe they can have a viable 6th form under this approach • Faith-based and Welsh medium schools see this as a highly desirable / only acceptable model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to maintain curriculum breadth; some traditional subjects are already being lost in schools • Resources / budgets / funding all set to reduce and many regard this model as unsustainable • Does not address the issue of surplus places • Does not provide value for money and in small 6th forms is likely to lead to cross-stage subsidisation • The transport costs of current collaborative arrangements are a drain on resources and will be difficult to maintain • Withdrawal of transport grants may require students to pay for own transport or remain in their home school with consequential reduction in subject choice • Where subjects are delivered in small groups this is not always conducive to high standards and a dynamic learning environment

10. Post 16 Operational Board – phases of work

10.1 Phase 1

In the first phase of its work the Post 16 Board agreed its terms of reference (see Appendix 4) and discussed the wider contexts that needed to be taken into account during the review. Appendix 5 sets out a number of these.

10.2 Phase 2

A significant amount of data was provided to the Board in relation to exam results, value-added data, 6th form numbers and projections, the post 16 grant and allocations to schools, the impact of overall demographics and size of 6th forms on budgets and efficiency / value for money, curriculum / subject audits and option structures in 6th forms and the FE college. Some of the key issues emerging were:

- The 2016 A level results for Bridgend were good with BCBC exceeding all Wales averages in most categories.

- Value-added data revealed some exceptional teaching in certain schools and subjects. However there is significant variation across schools and some subjects are showing sustained under-performance.
- There has been a fall in the post 16 grant allocation to BCBC from WG. This is due to reduced WG funding and a fall in 16-18 demographics in BCBC. The fall in student numbers is likely to continue for a few years and WG officials have alerted LAs to expect further budget cuts in the future.
- Across BCBC there is a wide range of A level and BTEC subjects on offer and all schools are able to meet the subject offer requirements of the Learning & Skills Measure (Wales) 2009. However the number of subjects available in each school varies considerably from 12 to 35 and students are not able to access the full offer. There are a relatively high number of small groups (below 10 students) especially in Year 13 which places a strain on financial resources. There is increasing concern over the ability to provide the full range of minority subjects.
- School 6th forms provide a partial integration of options that allows for a limited range of shared partnership subjects. In addition a smaller group of subjects are offered at the FE College in twilight sessions.

10.3 Phase 3

The Post 16 Board debated and agreed a set of aspirational statements to describe the future ambition for post 16 education across BCBC. During this exercise it was noted that neither the views of students nor governors were represented through the Board. As a consequence all school councils in secondary and special schools plus the student body in Bridgend College were contacted and asked to submit the students' view of aspirations for the future of 16-18 education across BCBC. All schools and the college responded. LA officers also met with nine out of the eleven governing bodies and invited them to contribute suggestions. Five governing bodies provided written responses. The views of the Board, students and governors were combined into an overall set of statements of ambition. The intention was to use these to test the efficacy of potential future options for delivering post education across BCBC. The full set of 58 statements can be viewed at Appendix 6.

10.4 Phase 4

The Board reviewed the range of potential options for the future configuration of 16-18 education across BCBC. The Board noted that a detailed options analysis could not be undertaken with the resources available to it and in the timescale that had been set out by the SRB. It was agreed, therefore, to consider a range of concepts for future provision and to appraise these with the intention of being able to make recommendations to the SRB. The concepts debated by the Board are set out below:-

Post 16 Operational Board – Concepts for testing

1. The Status Quo: detailed feedback provided through the Post 16 survey and the 2016 Post 16 Review. This can be considered as the starting point. Would other concepts be as good, better or worse in delivering the ambitions for post 16 and the areas covered in the survey?
 - Nine 6th form centres in mainstream secondary schools – predominantly ‘A’ levels
 - Post 16 provision in YBC and Heronsbridge Special schools
 - The emergence of the Penybont 6th form college collaboration
 - Some degree of collaboration / partnership activity and common timetabling
 - Twilight provision
 - Vocational courses at the college
 - Some limited provision with Work-based Training Providers

2. Concept 2 : Formation of 6th form centre / college
 - Model 2a – joint governance by all schools with retention of 11-18 status: in this model the Centre is funded through the LA and there is a Joint Governing Committee with representatives from all schools / Post 16 providers.
 - In adopting this approach the centre’s A level programmes could be staffed by existing school staff with the likelihood of college staff delivering vocational subjects plus the current twilight A levels.
 - School timetables could be aligned with that of the Centre.
 - Staff could travel to teach at the centre probably in half day blocks.
 - In terms of a site this could be on an existing school site, a new build, on the Pencoed FE campus or incorporated into any new town centre FE campus.

 - Model 2b – new governance and closure of 6th forms with re-designation of schools to 11-16. In this model we would be creating a new entity with its own governance although we would expect broad representation of schools and other post 16 providers on the Board.
 - This centre would be funded directly by Welsh Government and be considered an FE institution similar to the position of St. David’s 6th Form College in Cardiff
 - A new Governing Body would need to be established
 - All staff would need to be recruited with new leadership and a new college principal
 - Would require full application of the school organization code and ministerial approval

- Model 2c - a part tertiary model with one of the centres based on Bridgend College with the other being a new establishment; as in model 2b this would involve the closure of 6th forms and re-designation of schools to 11-16. In this model the centre would be an extension of Bridgend College and would fall under the governance of the college with leadership from the college principal

3. Concept 3 : Retention of some 6th forms alongside 6th form centre / college

- Model 3a – a mixed economy of one or more 6th forms alongside a 6th form centre with schools retaining their current 11-18 status. 6th forms continue as now but have a timetable that is aligned with the centre; 6th form centre is under joint governance as in model 2a above and shares similar features.
- Model 3b – the mixed economy but with the features of governance from model 2b above.
- Model 3c – the mixed economy but with features of governance from model 2c above.

4. Concept 4 : Full tertiary system

- In this concept all schools become 11-16 schools and students transfer to Bridgend College at the end of Year 11. The College has its own governance and funding from Welsh Government but there might be an expectation of increased representation from BCBC and secondary schools on the Governing Body.

5. Specific considerations

- Welsh medium provision to be considered as follows:
 - Current partnership arrangements with neighbouring WM schools to be continued / expanded
 - WM post 16 provision delivered within a 6th form centre
 - WM post 16 provision delivered within an FE setting
- Special school post 16 provision to be retained in special schools but with increased collaboration with Bridgend College and more ALN 16-18 year olds succeeding in a college setting
- The aspirations of Faith-based education post 16 for the Catholic high school and diocese

In order to support the Board's understanding of these concepts a briefing paper was prepared which contained links to a range of post 16 provision across Wales that provided examples of the concepts under discussion. This paper is attached at Appendix 7.

As indicated in the preceding notes model 2b and model 3b describe a situation where a new independent 6th form centre / college could be established. The closest example to this is St. David's Catholic 6th Form College in Cardiff. Although 6th form colleges are a significant part of the post 16 sector in England, St. David's is the only example in Wales. At the time of this review St. David's College was undertaking a consultation exercise with the intention of giving up independent FE status and returning to the local authority as a voluntary aided school. A copy of the consultation document is attached at Appendix 8. The Board recognised the strength of the arguments being put forward by St. David's College and took the view to discard models 2b and 3b from the appraisal exercise.

10.5 Phase 5

In this phase of the work the Board started to develop an appraisal methodology by which to evaluate the different concepts. It was recognised that the 58 statements of ambition could not all be included in an appraisal mechanism. The Board worked to reduce the list to 34 statements that could best be used for the appraisal of concepts. The Board then discussed the shortened list within the context of maintaining the status quo. At this point it became clear that those members of the Board who were not part of the Education Service felt they lacked knowledge and insight to make judgements on the current post 16 situation across BCBC. It was therefore agreed to undertake a survey of both staff and students to ascertain the views of the current participants in 16-18 education with regard to the ambitions proposed by the Board.

LA officers from the Education Service worked with the LA Communications team to prepare a detailed survey on post 16 provision. The survey covered all 58 statements of ambition set out under 7 headings:

- Teaching & Learning
- Subject choice
- Learner support
- Digital learning
- Personal skills
- Extra-curricular
- Learning environment

The scoring method was on a seven point scale from -3 to 0 to +3 with -3 the most negative and +3 the most positive. Information was circulated to all schools and the FE college. There were over 2000 responses with 1,526 student responses and 526 from staff. It represented one of the highest returns for a BCBC survey.

The responses from the survey provided the Board with significant insight into the current view of staff and students on the state of post 16 provision across Bridgend. Overall there were a lot of positive messages with relatively few negatives. Three

sets of feedback are attached to this report providing detailed information on the results of the survey. Please see Appendices 9, 10 and 11.

- Appendix 9 - a spreadsheet heatmap which displays the most positive responses dark green fading to pale green, yellow, amber and red as the responses are less positive / negative. The responses are first shown by theme for each school both overall (staff and student responses combined) and separately for staff and students. In the second set the full set of statements are ranked by response again shown as combined staff / student and separately.
- Appendix 10 - the formal report on the survey produced by the BCBC Communications team.
- Appendix 11 - a further narrative on the results prepared for the Board.

10.6 Phase 6

Having assimilated the results of the survey and other additional data, the Board reached agreement on the key aspects that would be used to appraise the various concepts. It also recognised that any appraisal method should also make reference to the post 16 section of the WG School Organisation Code and an Equalities Impact Assessment. These elements were distilled into 16 aspects plus 9 questions posed by the School Organisation Code and two areas from the Equalities Impact Assessment - Gender and Faith. Welsh language is covered in the code. Appendix 12 sets out a numbered grid of ambition and code statements and these are referenced in the appraisal grid against each of the 16 aspects. The appraisal grid was set out with a 0 to +3 scoring system at 0.5 intervals. The Board devoted a full day to debating each of the aspects and agreeing a score for each concept. A background paper titled “expansion of the aspects” was circulated to the Board prior to the day in order to provide a more detailed overview of each aspect. This is attached at Appendix 12a. The narrative behind each set of scores is provided below.

10.7 Phase 7

Aspect	Concepts							
	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
1. Quality of teaching & learning and outcomes achieved; Ambition 10, 13 Code 1								
Score	2	2	x	2	2.5	x	2	1.5

Concept 1 - Score 2

- Outcomes currently good but the Alps data reveals some weaknesses.
- Although there have been improvements in the average GCE points score for BCBC it still remains below the Welsh average.

- The level 3 threshold for BCBC is now just above the Welsh average.
- There have been improvements in the A*-A grade performance but the standards for the 3A*- A group of students is below par.

Concepts 2a to 4 – It was noted that from research evidence from England, the best performance at A levels is generally seen in 6th form colleges followed by 6th forms in schools and then FE colleges. St. David’s 6th form college is the top performing FE College in Wales. In BCBC the largest 6th forms regularly produce the best results together with those that have a selective intake i.e. Welsh medium and Faith.

Concept 4 – Score 2

- Vocational results very good with Bridgend College second in all Wales tables and the top performing traditional FE college
- The college does not currently deliver A levels (apart from a few subjects in twilight) and therefore this carries a risk in full tertiary model.

Concepts 2a, 2c, 3c – Score 2.5

- It was felt that these 3 models could all deliver better quality outcomes than the current position.

Concept 3a - Score 3

- It was felt that this model could deliver better quality outcomes than the current position.

Aspect	Concepts							
2.The range of the offer: Ambition – 17, 18,20,21,23,20,31,32; Code - 2	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	1.5	3	x	3	3	x	3	2.5

Concept 1 – Score 1.5

- Currently there are 53 A level and BTEC level 3 subjects on offer across 6th form settings. However students cannot access all these subjects. The number available in any given 6th form can vary from 12 to 35. Those with a more restricted choice will have to travel to other schools or to the college in twilight to gain access to a wider range of courses. Due to the options structures in schools not all subjects are available to external students.
- There is limited opportunity for learners to mix vocational and A level studies in their study programmes under the current arrangements.
- The Board agreed there were inequality and inconsistency issues in the current provision.
- There are also additional financial costs to meet the transport requirements of students travelling to other centres to access courses.

Concepts 2a, 2c, 3c and 4 – Score 2.5

- In all these models it was recognised that centralising provision would enable a greater offer to be accessible to all students.
- It also meant that there would be the opportunity for multiple sets in subjects creating more flexibility in the offer with an increased chance of learners getting their preferred combination of subjects.

Concept 3a - Score 3

- Retaining school based 6th form provision for Welsh-medium and Faith-based provision will avoid potential difficulties with staffing issues for the former and through common timetabling with partners allow staff to work between collaborative settings. This improves the case for 3a.

Aspect	Concepts							
3.Expert & inspiring staff with positive relationships: Ambition – 12,14,29 ; Code - 1	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	2	2.5	x	2.5	2.5	x	2.5	2.5

All concepts were initially scored 2. It was difficult to predict whether the relationships that exist now would be carried forward in to any new arrangements. It was noted that the movement of staff across the sector via new contracts or TUPE might cause some resistance and a dip in the quality of relationships.

Concepts 2a to 4 involved moves to new settings and in these circumstances it will be possible to recruit the “best” staff to the new posts thus indicating a score of 2.5.

Aspect	Concepts							
4.High quality impartial advice & guidance: Ambition – 3 ; Code – 2, 3.	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	1	1.5	x	2	1.5	x	2	2.5

Concept 1 – Score 1

- The work-based training providers found it difficult to get information about apprenticeships across to high achieving learners.
- The college had experienced variable access to Year 11 learners in schools.
- Careers Wales input to Year 11 has declined placing more responsibility on school staff. There are indications that as a result of a revised vision / strategy for Careers Wales there may be a move to allocate a greater proportion of existing resources to Year 11 from other areas of work.
- Although the quality of school led guidance is improving there remains some influence from institutional self-interest.

Concept 4 – Score 2.5

- With all schools 11-16 there is likely to be a greater openness in advice and guidance as nearly all pathways will be directed towards the tertiary college.
- However it was felt that there might still be under-representation of apprenticeship pathways and therefore a 3 could not be awarded.

Concepts 2a, 2c, 3a, 3c

- The logic being applied here is that where the schools are consistently 11-16 the impartiality of guidance is likely to be stronger eg 2c and should merit a score of 2.
- In model 2a schools are 11-18 with their own 6th form centre and guidance may favour this as a destination but less self-interest than model 1 therefore a score of 1.5.
- With 3a there will be some schools with 6th forms and some without and this may influence the impartiality generating a score of 1.5
- With 3c there will be some schools with 6th forms and some without but with the management of the new 6th form centre falling under FE governance there is likely to be an increase in impartiality generating a score of 2.

Aspect	Concepts							
5.Likelihood of increased participation 16-19: Code – 3	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	1.5	1	x	1	1.5	x	1.5	1

Concept 1 – Score 1.5

- Current participation rates are high at 98%. It was agreed to set a mid-point score of 1.5 to allow other models to reflect potential change.

Concepts 2a, 2c, 4 – Score 1

- The lower score for these models reflects the centralised nature of 16-18 provision in these which would result in increased travel for some students especially those coming from the valleys. This may reduce participation rates.

Concepts 3a, 3c – Score 1.5

- The mixed economy model might offset partially the transport issues described above but there would still be some increase so these models could not score higher than Concept 1.

Aspect	Concepts							
6.Transport (willingness to travel, costs to learners, LA discretionary transport costs): Code – 3, 9	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	3	1.5	x	1.5	2	x	2	1

Concept 1 – Score 2.5

- This was given a high score because it was felt that current transport arrangements were working.

Concepts 2a, 2c – Score 1.5

- In these models there would be at least 2 centres which may complicate transport arrangements hence the lower score.

Concepts 3a, 3c – Score 2

- The mix of some local provision and some centralised provision moderates the transport situation.

Concept 4 – Score 1

- This may require all learners to travel to the one centre which will increase demands on transport and not suit all learners.

Aspect	Concepts							
7.Impact on 11-16 provision in schools: Code - 5	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	0.5	0.5	x	0.5	1	x	0.5	0.5

Concept 1 – Score 0.5

- As there are currently no 11-16 schools then there will be no impact from this model. The Board agreed a benchmark score of 0.5.

All other concepts – the Board agreed that impact would come from the issues of travel, choice, staffing, ALN and language (of delivery). There may be detrimental effects on the ability of 11-16 schools to recruit and retain staff when there was no A level provision and may impact on standards at Key Stage 4. With the centralisation of provision there will be efficiencies and savings. One impact of this will be the need for schools to declare some redundancies although some of these staff may be recruited into the new post 16 centre. The decision to centralise provision will be taken by BCBC and therefore the borough needs to be cognisant of the costs attached to these potential redundancies and plan for how these costs might be met. The issue of staff moving between sites (the 11-16 school and 6th form campus) could also cause difficulties in travel, delays, timetabling and interruption to teachers' non-contact time. However economies of scale and the removal of 6th forms running deficit budgets could be seen as positives.

Concepts 2a, 2c, 3c, 4 – Score 0.5

- The Board felt that there would be negative impact on 11-16 provision across all concepts.

Concept 3a – Score 1

- Through retaining an 11-18 model in BCBC schools it was felt that this would be more beneficial to 11-16 provision in schools.

Aspect	Concepts							
8.Impact on viability of organisations already delivering post 16 provision: Code - 6	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	1	1.5	x	1.5	3	x	3	1.5

Concept 1 – Score 1

- It was recognised that there are already issues facing 6th form providers with regard to options, finance and numbers.

It was noted that if some schools retained 6th forms and others not this may impact on recruitment into Year 7.

Concepts 2a, 2c – Score 1.5

- It was felt these would improve the viability for some but not all.

Concepts 3a, 3c - Score 3

- It was felt that these offered the optimum viability where larger 6th forms could be maintained and unviable ones send their students to the 6th form centre.

Concept 4 – Score 1.5

- This model would have a negative impact on 6th form provision but would be positive from the perspective of the tertiary college.

Aspect	Concepts							
9.Financial aspects of provision: Ambition – 1, 25	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	1	3	x	3	2.5	x	3	3

Concept 1 – Score 1

- It was noted that some schools are already cross subsidising from 11-16 into the 6th form.

The Board recognised the need to factor in revenue and capital costs along with the potential for increased travel costs, surplus places and a possibly large one-off redundancy cost. Revenue can be expected to decline by 2% due to demographics with the potential for further reductions in the WG post 16 grant allocation to BCBC and Bridgend College. Larger centres are able to manage their budgets more efficiently / effectively. Also those centres with high retention rates from Year 11 into Year 12 are in a stronger position with resources although the relative gain will depend on the size of the Year 11 cohort.

Concepts 2a, 2c, 3a, 3c, 4 – Score 2.5

- Concept 4 presents the largest economy of scale
- All the others also allow for some degree in increase in size of centres and therefore improve economies of scale

Aspect	Concepts							
10.Support for learners: Ambition – 4, 8, 11	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	2	2	x	2	2.5	x	2	2

Concept 1 – Score 2

- This model lacks economies of scale.

Concept 4 – Score 2

- This could provide a wide range of services and have economies of scale.
- Due to the large numbers of students within a tertiary setting and those requiring support the quality of support provided overall might dip.

Concepts 2a, 2c, 3c – Score 2

- Because of centralisation and a mixed economy a score of 2.

Concept 3a – Score 2.5

- The learner survey indicated aspirations from learners for services that are currently not being provided or needs met. It was felt that model 3a was best placed to deliver on these.

Aspect	Concepts							
11.Standard of facilities including IT: Ambition – 16, 26, 27, 29	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	1.5	2	x	2	2	x	2	3

Concept 1 – Score 1.5

- The standard of facilities across all providers is currently quite variable. A score of 1.5 represents an average score to reflect this variation.

Concept 4 – Score 3

- It is envisaged that a full tertiary model would be predicated on capital investment in new buildings and facilities.

All other concepts – Score 2

- It is anticipated that through the development of new centres facilities would be upgraded or be available through new builds.

Aspect	Concepts							
12.Additional benefits to learners including extra-curricular and WEX: Ambition – 2, 9, 30; Code - 8	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	2	2	x	2	2	x	2	2

All concepts – Score 2

- Theoretically larger institutions could provide more activities. However this can be offset by the distance learners have to travel from home. With a wide catchment the institution may find learners struggle to participate in after-hours activities. This could mean creating more time at lunchtime or providing transport for those engaged in extra-curricular activities at the end of the academic day – which means incurring extra costs.
- The lack / shortage of PE / Games noted in the student survey indicates one area that needs to be addressed.
- Access to work experience varies considerably across BCBC. A fresh report is being prepared on this as the result of an enquiry from the Welsh Local Government Association to all LAs in Wales.

Aspect	Concepts							
	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
13a. (ALN Learners – mainstream) Impact for learners with ALN: Ambition – 7, 15; Code 1, 2, 3								
Score	1.5	2.5	x	2.5	3	x	3	2.5

Aspect 13a does not include learners within resource base settings in mainstream schools.

Concept 1 – Score 1.5

- These learners considered alongside the other learners in mainstream and a score of 1.5 was considered appropriate for the current situation.

Concepts 2a, 2c, 4 – Score 2.5

- It is anticipated that ALN provision will be a key element in the offer provided by the new 6th form centres whether school or college led.

Concepts 3a and 3c – Score 3

- In these models there is the flexibility of retaining some 6th form ALN provision in Special schools and therefore increasing the diversity of the offer.

Aspect	Concepts							
	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
13b. (ALN Learners – Special schools) Impact for learners with ALN: Ambition – 7, 15; Code 1, 2, 3								
Score	2.5	1	x	1	2.5	x	2.5	1

Concepts 1, 3a, 3c – Score 2.5

- These models offer the flexibility of post 16 provision in special school 6th forms and this together with the college would maximise the progression pathways for this group.
- Better links need to be established between schools and college to aid this progression.

Concepts 2a, 2c and 4 – Score 1

- There are concerns over the ability to provide expert staff in the tertiary setting and over providing the physical environment needed for these learners.
- It was felt that behaviour management policies would need to be over-hauled to reflect the presence of these learners in FE settings.

Aspect	Concepts							
14.Impact on Welsh medium provisions: Ambition 5, 22; Code – 7; EIA - 12	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
Score	2	0	x	0	3	x	3	0

In considering Welsh medium provision the Board recognised the value of ethos and culture in WM schools and the continuation of this into post 16 provisions. There is a significant strength in the immersion of students in a wholly Welsh language environment. Some of the concepts suggest bilingual settings for the delivery of WM provision. This would run counter to the expectations expressed by the Welsh medium sector, the aspirations in Welsh Government policy on the Welsh language and the LA’s response to these as expressed in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The Board reflected this by agreeing lower scoring values in these settings.

Concept 1 – Score 2

- Whilst maintaining a unique delivery model through the medium of Welsh, the WM School recognises that it cannot do everything on its own; the score recognises these limitations.

Concepts 2a, 2c, 4 – Score 0

- The potential dilution of ethos and culture in these settings could have a very significant impact on WM provision post 16.
- There is also the repeated issue of trying to recruit WM staff to deliver post 16 provisions in the new campus / college as well as trying to recruit into the 11-16 WM school at a time when it is already very challenging to recruit staff into an 11-18 WM school.

Concepts 3a, 3c – Score 3

- These models would allow the WM School to retain its 6th form and ensure the ethos and culture of WM education is fully retained in 16-18 WM provision.
- This would also better meet the staffing issues addressed in earlier discussions.

- The WM school would also have the flexibility to work with other WM partners outside BCBC notably in RCT.
- Through these concepts there would also be an expectation that the WM school would work in active partnership with Bridgend College to put in place WM delivery of courses where the college is the delivery specialist, particularly for vocational courses.

Aspect	Concepts							
	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
15. Impact on Faith-based provision: Ambition – 6, 34; EIA - 11								
Score	2	0	x	0	3	x	3	0

Many of the considerations given to WM provision also apply to Faith based provision, especially in relation to ethos. The Board noted that Faith schools could work with partners in ways that might not be desirable for WM and that provides this sector with a more flexible response.

Concept 1 – Score 2

- Whilst maintaining a delivery model in a Faith-based environment and ethos, it is recognised that Faith based schools cannot do everything on their own; the score recognises these limitations.

Concepts 3a and 3c – Score 3

- These models provide the flexibility for 16-18 provision to be delivered within a Faith-based 6th form setting with the appropriate ethos.

All other concepts – Score 0.

Aspect	Concepts							
	1	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4
16. Contribution to 14-19 agenda in context of local partnerships and networks: Code - 4								
Score	1	1.5	x	1.5	2	x	1.5	1.5

When there existed a specific WG grant to support 14-19 developments there had been an upsurge in partnership activity and cluster working. Now that grant funds have lost their identity and have been merged into the Education Improvement Grant and delegated to schools, cluster and partnership activity has declined. The Board recognised that more could be done with regard to cluster working.

For the WM School which is titled “*Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd*” it means that all courses must be delivered through the medium of Welsh or they will not receive funding. This therefore is potentially a limiting factor for partnership working with English medium schools or the college and twilight provision.

Concept 3a which has schools collaborating around post 16 centres may prove to be the strongest model for enhancing local partnership and network activity.

At the close of the discussion the Board agreed to set Concept 1 to a score of 1 and all the rest to 1.5.

10.8 Overall assessment

The overall scores can be found in the completed grid attached as Appendix 13. The Board identified certain aspects to be more critical / important than others and it was agreed a weighting should be applied to these. However the same order of scoring prevailed under both the weighted and non-weighted method. The descending order of scores for the different concepts was as follows:

Concept		Position	Score	
No.	Description		Unweighted	Weighted
3a	1 or more 6 th forms with a 6 th form centre under school governance plus FE college	1	40.5	34.9
3c	1 or more 6 th forms with a 6 th form centre plus FE college both under FE governance	2	37.5	32
1	Status quo – current situation	3	27.5	23.4
2c	11-16 schools; joint 6 th form centre plus FE college both under FE governance	4	27	23.6
4	Full tertiary model under FE college and FE governance	5	27	23.4
2a	11-18 schools; joint 6 th form centre(s) under school governance plus FE college	6	26.5	23.2

During the assessment exercise the position of Welsh medium, Faith-based and ALN provisions were repeatedly discussed. The additional constraints posed by these specific provisions are described below. In addition the Board requested the removal of Aspects 13b (ALN Special schools), 14, (Welsh medium) and 15 (Faith-based) from the assessment grid in order to understand how the various concepts would compare if separate solutions were provided for these three areas. A further table that shows the effect on the overall scores when discounted for Welsh, Faith and ALN is set out below.

Welsh medium provision

When Welsh medium provision is considered within the context of concepts 2a, 2c and 4 a number of concerns were expressed.

- In concepts 2a, 2c and 4 post 16 Welsh medium provisions would be removed from the school setting and placed within a bilingual college / 6th form centre setting. Whilst this may provide for continuity of preferred language (ie Welsh) these settings would not provide the immersion in Welsh language, culture and ethos that is provided within Welsh medium schools. The Welsh medium schools would see this as a serious diminution of the LA's capacity to promote Welsh language provisions.
- For concepts 2a, 2c and 4 there are significant implications for staffing. The Board felt that there would be major recruitment issues for the new post 16 setting. The Welsh medium school sector already faces considerable challenges in recruiting staff, especially subject specialist staff, who are competent to deliver through the medium of Welsh. The new post-16 setting would add considerably to this pressure and it was felt that it might have real difficulties in recruiting sufficient Welsh medium staff to deliver the breadth of curriculum comparable with the English medium offer. This would present a retrograde step for Welsh medium provision.
- The policy direction for both Welsh Government and BCBC through the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is to increase the volume of learners in the Welsh medium sector. The removal of post-16 provisions from the school sector could be seen as running counter to these policies and plans.
- The 11-18 Welsh medium school in Bridgend has close partnership ties with WM schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT). This collaboration is critical to the ability of WM schools in both LAs to provide a suitable breadth of curriculum. The removal of the 6th form from YGG Llangynwyd in BCBC under concepts 2a, 2c and 4 would have a de-stabilising effect on WM provision in schools in RCT.
- Under concepts 1, 3a and 3c YGG Llangynwyd would retain its post-16 learners within the Welsh-medium environment but the school, in order to meet the requirements of, for example, the Learning & Skills Measure, will need to collaborate with other partners. This would be nearby Welsh-medium 6th forms such as YGG Llanhari in the neighbouring LA of Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Faith- based provision

When Faith- based provision is considered within the context of concepts 2a, 2c and 4 a number of concerns were expressed.

- In BCBC there is one Faith-based post 16 provider, namely Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School.

- From the viewpoint of the Faith-based sector it is the distinctive ethos that exists within their settings that they would wish to see maintained into post 16 provisions. Concepts 2a, 2c and 4 would place post 16 provisions for Faith-based learners into settings without this ethos.
- In RCT Cardinal Newman Catholic High School worked in partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd to establish a 6th form within the college that maintains a Faith ethos. It is understood that this arrangement has now been withdrawn.
- Under concepts 1, 3a and 3c Archbishop McGrath would retain its post 16 learners within the Faith-based environment but the school, in order to meet the requirements of, for example, the Learning & Skills Measure, will need to collaborate with other partners. This could be nearby 6th forms / 6th form centres or Faith-based schools in neighbouring LAs

ALN provision

In giving consideration to post 16 provision for learners with ALN the Board made a distinction between those learners who were in mainstream settings pre-16 and those in special schools or in learning resource centres based in mainstream schools. Hence Aspect 13 was sub-divided into 13a and 13b. Currently those learners covered by 13b have the opportunity of 6th form provision in both Ysgol Bryn Castell (YBC) and Heronsbridge.

- Learners in Heronsbridge stay within that specialist provision usually until they are 19. The specialist nature of the provision, facilities and the staff would preclude Heronsbridge from concepts 2a, 2c and 4.
- With regard to YBC a number of learners proceed to college from Year 11 and others remain within the 6th form setting. The nature of these learners, often with significant behavioural issues, means that they benefit from the expertise provided by specialist YBC staff and is not necessarily available in other settings. It was felt that concepts 2a, 2c and 4 might prove inappropriate for a proportion of learners from YBC and Learning Resource Bases.
- As WG moves to implement new legislation on ALN reform along with regional ALN innovation projects on transition and post-16 progression for learners with ALN it may be appropriate to keep open both 6th form and college progression routes until the outcomes of these developments become clearer. Therefore under concepts 1, 3a and 3c YBC would retain its post-16 learners within a 6th form setting.

Revised table of scores excluding scores for Aspects 13b, 14 and 15.

Concept		Score		
No.	Description	Position	Unweighted	Weighted
3a	1 or more 6 th forms with a 6 th form centre under school governance plus FE college	1	31	27.1
3c	1 or more 6 th forms with a 6 th form centre plus FE college both under FE governance	2	30	26.2
4	Full tertiary model under FE college and FE governance	3	27	24.4
2c	11-16 schools; joint 6 th form centre plus FE college both under FE governance	4	27	23.8
2a	11-18 schools; joint 6 th form centre(s) under school governance plus FE college	5	26.5	23.4
1	Status quo – current situation	6	21.5	18.6

11. Recommendations

Following careful consideration of a range of data, research, stakeholder views and concepts of educational provision for 16-18 year olds across BCBC the Post 16 Operational Board undertook detailed discussions and an assessment of the concepts. From the results of these activities the Board recommends that Concept 3 is taken forward as the preferred concept.

Concept 3a:- The retention of one or more 6th forms together with the formation of a 6th form centre.

- All 6th forms and the centre would be funded through the LA post 16 grant allocation from Welsh Government.
- The 6th form centre would be run under joint governance of 11-18 schools and the LA with a dedicated governing committee with representatives drawn from post 16 providers in Bridgend
- It is anticipated there would be close collaboration with Bridgend FE College.
- The potential sites for the 6th form centre would be considered through the business case but would not preclude incorporation into a new FE campus if one were to be forthcoming for Bridgend.

Concept 3c:- The retention of one or more 6th forms together with the formation of a 6th form centre.

- All 6th forms would be funded through the LA post 16 grant allocation from Welsh Government and would retain their current model of governance.
- The 6th form centre would be funded through the Welsh Government post 16 grant allocation to Bridgend FE College.
- The 6th form centre would come under the overall governance of Bridgend College but it is expected that it will have its own governance committee with representatives from all the current post 16 providers.
- Potential sites for the 6th form centre would be considered through the business case and it would form part of the college estate.

In addition to these recommendations the Post 16 Operational Board also recommends that further detailed work is undertaken to produce business cases for three further areas of post 16 provision;-

1. Welsh medium provision
2. Faith-based provision
3. Progression pathways and provision for learners with ALN

Post 16 Operational Board

June 2017