

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

19 NOVEMBER 2019

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

REVIEW OF POST-16 PROVISION ACROSS BRIDGEND (PHASE 4 REPORT)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 In April 2019, Cabinet gave approval for work to be undertaken to prepare specific option proposals under Phase 4 of the review of post-16 provision across Bridgend.
- 1.2 This report provides Cabinet with the detail of those option proposals and seeks approval to go to public consultation on the basis of the proposals contained in Appendix 1 and supporting information in Appendices 2 to 4.

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority/priorities:

- **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2016, a Strategic Review Board (SRB) was established 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.'

- 3.2 The SRB in turn established a Post-16 Operational Board to review post-16 provision across Bridgend County Borough. This Board presented its report back to the SRB and then to Cabinet in October 2017. SRB recommended that six concepts be considered for the future of post-16 education and recommended two preferred options. Cabinet endorsed these recommendations and asked for more detailed work to be undertaken. This was completed and reported back to Cabinet in April 2018 where Cabinet gave approval for a public consultation on the six concepts and preferred options for post-16 provision across Bridgend County Borough.

- 3.3 The public consultation documentation was approved by Cabinet on 20 November 2018 and the consultation went live across December 2018 to February 2019.
- 3.4 A post-consultation report was prepared and went to Cabinet on 16 April 2019. Approval was given by Cabinet to move to a Phase 4 of the Post-16 Review and to prepare detailed alternatives against a more limited range of options.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 In April 2019, Cabinet approved the further analysis of three options from the original six concepts. These are:

Option 1 - A mix of school sixth forms with some mergers to create new local authority maintained sixth-form centre(s).

Option 2 - A mix of school sixth forms with some mergers to create new further education (FE) college governed sixth-form centre(s).

Option 3 - The retention of sixth forms in all schools - the current position (ie a distributed tertiary model based on collaboration, but with further development in order to improve the delivery of this option).

- 4.2 The attached Phase 4 paper at Appendix 1 and Appendices 2 to 4 include updates to data contained in previous reports and the public consultation documents.

- 4.3 Furthermore contained in the paper in Appendix 1, a range of outcomes are explored in the context of the three proposed remaining options specifically:

- For Option 1, 6 potential outcomes are described (Outcomes A to F) and a range of positives and concerns for each of these is presented.
- For Option 2, there is an overlap with Outcome F in Option 1 and 2 FE college scenarios are considered.
- For Option 3, where sixth forms are retained in all secondary school settings, a range of issues have been identified that would need to be addressed in order to deal with the perceived concerns around the current sixth-form arrangements.

- 4.4 Cabinet approval is now being sought to take the option proposals detailed in Appendix 1 out to public consultation from 2 December 2019 to 21 February 2020 with the intention of bringing the results of the consultation back to Cabinet in April 2020. In addition feasibility studies will be prepared, particularly where there are capital implications, and be presented to Cabinet together with the outcomes of the consultation, should Cabinet give approval to go out to consultation.

- 4.5 Should the public consultation be approved then officers will engage with the full range of stakeholders as set out in the Welsh Government's Schools Organisation Code. In addition to the standard consultation processes, it is intended that there will be, as in the previous consultation, engagement with pupils, staff, governors and parents in each secondary school and parents of pupils in each primary cluster will be invited to the secondary school parent event.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

6.1 The previous reports to Cabinet, when considering the range of concepts, have referenced the issues of faith, Welsh language and the additional learning needs aspects of post-16 provision. These aspects are again referenced in the draft consultation paper however the work connected to additional learning needs is being subsumed into the regional plan for the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

6.2 A revised initial EIA impact screening has been undertaken and is attached to this report at Appendix 6. A full EIA will be undertaken as part of the consultation exercise where stakeholders will be asked to contribute to the assessment.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 There is a financial pressure in the education system which challenges the viability of small sixth forms and the range of subjects that are available to learners aged 16 to 18.

7.2 The options for the future of post-16 provision in the County presented in Appendix 1 are aimed at providing choice in post-16 settings, maintaining the breadth of subject choice, improving facilities and enhancing the standards of performance.

7.3 Through these developments, the Council is striving to meet the ambitions of learners and support them to become high skilled members of the workforce in Wales. This will enable them to access employment and thereby have incomes that allow them to lead fulfilling lives.

7.4 Through all stages of the review of post-16 provision there has been close engagement with a range of stakeholders including the young people in schools and college. This has meant that the voice of learners has been clearly articulated in the design of future provision. Over 2,000 learners contributed to the public consultation earlier in the year and learners will continue to be engaged in any future consultation activity.

7.5 Further detail can be found in the accompanying Wellbeing and Future Generations Assessment for Post-16 in Appendix 5.

8. Financial implications

8.1 Funding for sixth form provision in Bridgend County Borough is provided by Welsh Government as a single post-16 grant allocation each year. There is a core allocation based mainly on student numbers, with additional allocations to take into account student deprivation and Welsh-medium education.

8.2 Total funding for 2018-2019 was £5,829,430. In the 2018-2019 financial year and the two preceding years, the core grant had a cumulative reduction of £672,427 as a

result of the combined effects of lower student numbers and reductions by Welsh Government to the central post-16 grant for schools.

- 8.3 The total allocation for 2019-2020 is £5,750,256, a reduction of 1.36% or £79,174 on the 2018-2019 allocation.
- 8.4 The consultation report referenced the financial pressures being faced by the Council, its secondary schools and Bridgend College. The need to use limited resources efficiently was discussed along with providing good value for money. Further updated information is included in Appendix 3.
- 8.5 Further work will be undertaken via feasibility studies on the capital and transport implications of the different outcomes and options referenced in paragraph 4.1.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to give approval to go to consultation on the options detailed in Appendix 1 for the future of post-16 education across Bridgend County Borough.

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Background documents:

Report to Cabinet, 31 October 2017, A REVIEW OF THE FUTURE OF POST-16 PROVISION ACROSS BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Cabinet, 24 April 2018, REVIEW OF POST-16 EDUCATION (PHASE TWO)

Report to Cabinet, 20 November 2018, REVIEW OF POST-16 EDUCATION (PHASE THREE AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION)

Report to Cabinet, 16 April 2019, REVIEW OF POST-16 EDUCATION (RESULT OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL TO MOVE TO PHASE 4)

Draft Consultation paper on the potential re-organisation of post-16 provision across Bridgend County Borough Council plus eight appendices.

Wellbeing and Future Generations Assessment

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment