

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 19 JUNE 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER EDUCATION AND YOUTH**

SUBJECT: **POST 16 COMMISSIONING & PLANNING CYCLE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To update Councillors on the requirements for the commissioning and planning cycle for 2015-16, under the new national Post 16 Planning and Funding Framework.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Funding for provision of post 16 education is provided through specific grant by the Welsh Government. Under new arrangements, Local Authorities are required to undertake an annual commissioning and planning cycle as a condition of funding. The planning cycle itself is focused on securing high quality provision for learners and meeting published ministerial priorities. Local Authorities have an important role in the development and submission of plans. Local Authorities are asked to carefully consider the information they submit and ensure that it reflects realistic and appropriate learning for all learners.

2.02 Plans should adhere to the following principles:

- providing high quality educational experiences and outcomes for all learners;
- ensuring equality and diversity;
- optimising the use of resources through models of collaboration and sharing;
- ensuring operational cost effectiveness and efficiencies;
- ensuring provision is affordable and sustainable; and
- promoting the delivery and development of Welsh-medium provision.

2.03 Plans should clearly fit with the Local Authorities policies for Post-16 education in regard to Welsh Baccalaureate developments and vocational provision. Local Authorities should also ensure that planned learner numbers are realistic and achievable, reflecting learner need and not perceived financial advantage.

2.04 The plans are required to support all learners in the area. They should be developed in collaboration with all local providers, in order to ensure a holistic and clear understanding of what is available to learners and to help avoid duplication, especially for vocational provision.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Planning Framework is centred on improving the information flow between Local Authorities, Further Education Institutions and DfES in order to provide commissioners with a greater understanding of post 16 educational provision and how it is adding value across Wales.

3.02 The planning cycle can be broken down into six stages as detailed in Appendix 1. Although the process has been standardised to promote a consistent approach between Local Authorities and Further Education Institutions, it is acknowledged that these two sectors are different and therefore our approach varies slightly and has been tailored to reflect the different planning and delivery circumstances.

3.03 The Provisional Plan for 2015-16 will be prepared and submitted by 14 November 2014. DfES will analyse the plans and provide feedback to Local Authorities during December 2014 and January 2015 prior to the issuing of final funding allocations. Local Authorities will be expected to consider the feedback from the provisional plans when developing the final plans for submission.

3.04 The Ministerial Priorities for Local Authorities 2015-16 letter was issued on 30 May 2014. This triggers the start of the new planning cycle for 2015-16. The Priorities for Local Authorities for 2015/16 can be summarised as follows:

- Priority 1 – Tackling Poverty
- Priority 2 – Literacy and Numeracy
- Priority 3 – Learner Support and Progression
- Priority 4 – Developing Welsh-medium Provision
- Priority 5 – Developing more collaboration between post 16 providers

3.05 Our plan must be influenced by local institutional recruitment, retention and outcome information, together with wider commissioning information such as local and regional Labour Market Intelligence. We will focus on the following headings:

- **Priority 1 - Tackling Poverty:** reducing the number of NEETS aged 16-19 is a shared national and local priority through the Youth Engagement and Progression Strategy. We provide targeted support for learners from deprived backgrounds based upon need and identified through casework and performance data. We work with key stakeholders to ensure that arrangements are in place for those learners identified at risk of

disengagement. The role of Engagement and Progression Coordinator is important in coordinating with Careers Wales, Youth Services and all post 16 providers.

- **Priority 2 – Improving Learner Outcomes, including Literacy and Numeracy:** there is a key national priority for raising the levels of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. Flintshire's data is comparatively positive in securing positive outcomes at GCSE for English/ Welsh First language and Mathematics. The plan must specifically describe how we will continue to support learners who did not achieve GCSE grades A*- C in English, Welsh first language and Mathematics at age 16. It must also set out how we monitor the performance of learners during their post 16 studies to ensure they have sufficient standard of literacy and numeracy skills to enable progression in future. Flintshire's providers are also comparatively positive at gaining passes at A level. The outcomes in securing higher grade outcomes at A level are not so positive across the local system. Improving this position should also continue to remain a local priority (linked to priority 3).
- **Priority 3 – Learner Support and Progression:** the introduction of the national post 16 Planning and Funding Framework aims to ensure that all learners are given the opportunity to study a structured programme of learning. This section will set out our progress and further actions to maximise progression routes to higher level education, training and employment. The aim here is to help overcome the negative impact of social and economic deprivation on education and training; and provide the necessary support to enable all learners to complete their studies. This section will describe how we record learner progression for post 16 Learning Programmes; and ensure that there is no unwarranted duplication of vocational provision for learners in school sixth forms and those who decide to study at a further Education institution. The Local Authority is expected to set out how Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) is used to influence and plan post 16 provision in the area. This section must also cover policy is on the delivery of the Welsh Baccalaureate for post 16 learners and how take up of the new Welsh Baccalaureate will be encouraged and monitored. This section will also set out how the Local Authority ensures that suitable provision is in place for post 16 learners with additional learning needs, including data sharing and joint working arrangements to ensure effective school to college transition for learners with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities. This section must also provide a summary of how the Local Authority supports learners in accessing impartial careers' advice and guidance and the process in place to monitor post 16 performance especially in respect of learner completion, "drop out" rates and learner achievements at A levels (especially grades A*- C).

- **Priority 4 – Developing Welsh-medium Provision:** The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is expected to assess demand for Welsh Medium Education and set out plans to increase the availability and take-up of Welsh-medium/bilingual learning. This includes continuing to develop learners' skills in the Welsh Language at post 16 level. The commissioning plan for post 16 education must cross refer to the WESP.
- **Priority 5 – Collaboration Between Providers:** This section will describe how the Local Authority, school sixth forms and Further Education Institutions collaborate to address identified issues, avoid duplication of provision and share resources and best practice. It will also set out how the Local Authority is working in partnership with the Regional Consortium for the benefit of learners' at post-16 level. The goal must be to ensure that all learners are provided with appropriate advice and enabled to access programmes that best prepare them for life and work. In order for this section to be accepted by the Welsh Government planned provision should not duplicate already programmes already offered locally.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 Councillors are encouraged to receive a further report in November setting out commissioning plans for 2015-16.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Successful completion of the Provisional Plan for 2015-16 will enable confirmation of funding allocations in early 2015.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 There are no environmental impact implications arising directly from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 There are no equalities impact implications arising directly from this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None at this stage. Commissioning plans will be developed in consultation with all local providers and appropriately involve learners and key stakeholders, such as LSB partners.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None at this stage.

12.00 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The Commissioning & Planning Cycle

Appendix 2: Learner Outcome Data –Retention Rates (2009 to 2013)

Appendix 3: Learner Outcome Data – School A Level Data

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

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