

**Executive Response to the Final Report of the Further Education in the
Salisbury Area Scrutiny Task Group**

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the Executive's response to the final report of the Further Education in the Salisbury Area Scrutiny Task Group (May 2012).

Action Required of the Committee

2. To note the Executive's responses and agree further action as appropriate.

Background

3. In September 2010, the Children's Services Select Committee established a task group to undertake a review of the post-16 education available in the Salisbury area. This was to become the Further Education in the Salisbury Area Task Group. The Task Group was, in summary, established to:
 - (a) Identify the number of young people leaving the Salisbury area to access 16-19 education;
 - (b) Identify why these young people choose to travel and the impact of doing so;
 - (c) Investigate the young people's perception of the 16-19 provision available to them;
 - (d) Make recommendations, if a gap is identified, as to how this need might be met.
4. At the Meeting of Children's Select Committee 31 May 2012 the Committee endorsed the final report of the Further Education in the Salisbury Area Task Group and referred its recommendations, together with the concerns expressed by the Headteacher and Board of Governors of The Trafalgar School, Downton, to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services for response at the Select Committee's meeting on 26 July 2012.

Task Group Recommendations and Executive Responses

Developing sixth form provision in central Salisbury

Select Committee recommendation:

1. In its strategic role to ensure the provision of effective and efficient local education and training, Wiltshire Council facilitates urgent discussions between the Laverstock schools and Wiltshire College regarding collaborative provision of a broad, high-quality post-16 offer, harnessing the strengths and resources of all four institutions. Particular consideration should be given to developing jointly-run sixth form provision with a focus on AS/A2 levels, to complement the existing grammar school provision, but also including opportunities for technical and vocational learning.”

Executive response:

- (i) Officers have acted swiftly and held initial meetings on 18.06.12 and 10.07.12 with the Head teachers of the schools on the Laverstock Campus regarding future strategic planning for the site. Further meetings are planned and will include other key providers.
- (ii) Initial discussions have been held with Wiltshire College and more detailed discussions are already taking place between the College and the Schools on the Laverstock Campus regarding the potential to establish a Post 16 partnership with the College franchising funded places to the partnership. (With this strategy the College will remain responsible for the provision, although the local management would be on the Laverstock Campus schools)
- (iii) For the medium to longer term developments officers will work with the Schools, the College, Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Department for Education to explore all other potential opportunities for Post 16 provision in the Salisbury area including the potential of; Individual Sixth Form development, a University Technical College, and/or 16-19 Free School options.

Select Committee recommendation:

2. “Parallel discussions are held with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to explore the capital and revenue funding implications of this project.”

Executive response:

- (i) An initial meeting between Local Authority Officers and the Education Funding Agency took place on the 3rd July to share the report and establish the EFA’s initial reaction to the findings and recommendations within the report.
- (ii) The EFA were unable to respond at the time regarding available capital funding and further meetings are planned. With regard to revenue funding, the EFA confirmed that the use of funding on a lagged learner basis would allow for student numbers to grow under a franchise

partnership with Wiltshire College. Discussions to date indicate there is no obvious development funding available at this time.

- (iii) The EFA were unable to comment in relation to the development of an independent Sixth Form being established on the Laverstock Campus; officers will however continue to seek a view/response in relation to this and the other potential developments.

Improving the 16-19 educational offer in the Salisbury area

Select Committee recommendation:

3. "Wiltshire Council works with Wiltshire College and other 16-19 education providers where appropriate, to explore the factors behind:
- a. the higher average attainment demonstrated by learners from the Salisbury area who study at Hampshire colleges compared with those who study at in-county providers;
 - b. the greater retention of learners from the Salisbury area demonstrated by Hampshire colleges as compared with Wiltshire College;
 - c. the significant numbers of learners from the Salisbury area taking courses in Science & Maths, and Arts, Media & Publishing, at Hampshire providers;

and designs and agrees plans to encourage improvements in these areas.

Executive response:

- (i) Local Authority officers are exploring with the EFA how, within the statutory framework and available resource, it may be possible to respond in detail to bullet points a to c. In the meantime officers will work in partnership with all providers to effectively use the latest available data to inform decision making, including targeted improvement of provision.
- (ii) Officers are continuing to work in partnership with providers across the South Wiltshire area to support improvement to provision, especially where the qualification offer is not available in the identified curriculum areas. It is important to note however that it is not the responsibility of Wiltshire Council to design or implement plans in order to secure improvement within individual providers, especially in the FE, Training Provider or Academy sectors or for an LA maintained school who are not considered to be at risk or causing concern.

Improving the marketing and promotion of the 16-19 education offer in the Salisbury area

Select Committee recommendation:

4. Wiltshire Council works with schools and colleges to improve the marketing and promotion of 16-19 education in the Salisbury area, with consideration given to ideas such as a comprehensive careers and training fair, common

websites and/or a magazine circulated in- and out-of-county to promote the full local post-16 offer.

Executive response:

- (i) Local Authority officers are working and have facilitated a number of projects and campaigns to support the availability of information to young people and their parents and carers, including the 'Your Choices' website/App, leaflets, theatre tour, all at no cost to the user. More information can be found at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/choices. Under the Raising Participation work this type of provision will continue.
- (ii) Economic Development, Economy and Enterprise within Wiltshire Council funded, in February 2012, an Apprenticeship Fair in Salisbury for young people, employers and providers. This created a valuable source of information, it is hoped that a similar event will be provided in 2013.
- (iii) Changes to statutory duties and responsibilities in relation to the provision of information advice and guidance coupled with the reduction in funding means that it is not possible for the Council to provide marketing and other information. This duty rests with the National Careers Service and individual providers, however officers will work with local providers to explore how further to support this recommendation.

Improving the Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) available to young people across Wiltshire

Select Committee recommendation:

- 5. Recognising the substantial cuts in government funding for local authority Connexions services, and the responsibility for such provision shifting from the local authorities to schools in September 2012, Wiltshire Council supports Wiltshire secondary schools to develop their offer of impartial training and careers advice to their pupils and parents from Year 9, when they are making their GCSE choices, in order to maximise awareness of the full range of opportunities available to them.

Executive response:

- (i) Support is available to secondary schools and providers to develop the quality of their Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). This is a service offered at cost recovery as this is no longer a duty on the Local Authority.
- (ii) From September 2012 designated individual school level support will no longer be provided by the Council for CEIAG. Support for learners identified as vulnerable will continue to be provided via a Personal Adviser.
- (iii) Under the statutory responsibilities for Raising the Participation Age (RPA) the 'Your Choices' campaign aims to raise awareness of choices available for young people across Wiltshire. www.wiltshire.gov.uk/choices

Developing school sixth form provision to the north of Salisbury

Select Committee recommendation:

6. In its strategic role to ensure the provision of effective and efficient local education and training, Wiltshire Council encourages and supports the development of the Sixth Form Vision agreed by Avon Valley College and The Stonehenge School.

Executive response:

- (i) An officer has been working to support this joint development over the last 18 months and has supported the development of the joint vision and the development of the existing action plan. The officer is continuing to work and support the development of this partnership and it remains part of the Post 16 Statement of Priorities.
- (ii) The Post 16 developments associated with Avon Valley College and The Stonehenge School have been raised with the EFA and will continue to be discussed with them into the future.

Select Committee recommendation:

7. The Children's Services Select Committee notes its support for Wiltshire Council's submission of a bid for funding from the government's Priority Schools Building Programme for additional capital funding for The Stonehenge School.

Executive response:

- (i) Since the publication of this report the DfE have advised Wiltshire Council of the outcomes of the Priority Schools Building Programme. Wiltshire was successful in its application for two of its projects, including Wyvern College. Unfortunately the application for Stonehenge School was not seen as a priority in this round by the DfE. The Council will bring the application forward again should further rounds become available.

Improving transport links and schemes

Select Committee recommendation:

8. Wiltshire Council works with Wiltshire College and local bus companies to review and, if appropriate, revise existing bus routes and develop more attractive student travel schemes to enhance the appeal of study at Wiltshire College's Salisbury campus.

Executive response:

- (i) Officers from passenger transport working with education officers will continue to facilitate action with Wiltshire College and with other Post 16 providers to review processes and initiate potential changes to support access.

Select Committee recommendation:

9. Whilst recognising the challenging economic climate, Wiltshire College considers providing their own student transport service as is currently offered by some of its major competitors.

No Executive response is provided as Wiltshire College will respond directly to this recommendation

16-19 Education funding inequalities between Wiltshire and Hampshire

Select Committee recommendation:

10. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Chairman of the Children's Services Select Committee write a joint letter to the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Skills and Lifelong Learning to draw attention to, and request a review of the disparity between the funding received by Wiltshire and Hampshire for provision of post-16 education.

Executive response:

- (i) I will consider the evidence in relation to the latest Post 16 Funding Guidance (released July 2012) and the differentials between authorities and respond as appropriate when the information is clearer.

Connexions and YPLA student destination data disparities

Select Committee recommendation:

11. Wiltshire Council advises Wiltshire schools, colleges and other relevant bodies, of the disparities between the student destination data provided by Connexions and by the YPLA and the reasons behind these.

Executive response:

- (i) This action is complete. The data provided by the former Connexions Service and used in the original report came directly from schools in the area and showed intended and actual destinations. This data was compared to the former Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA) data which includes those learners already accessing pre -16 education outside Wiltshire from the wider Salisbury area.

Encouraging students to remain on-campus at Wiltshire College, Salisbury

Select Committee recommendation:

12. Recognising the challenges inherent in being a city-centre provider, the Task Group recommends that Wiltshire College considers the potential impact on learner retention and attainment of its 16-19 learners having such flexibility to leave the Salisbury campus when not in lectures and, if appropriate,

implements measures to encourage students to remain on campus.

No Executive response is provided as Wiltshire College will respond directly to this recommendation

Monitoring implementation of the Task Group's recommendations

Select Committee recommendation:

13. The Task Group is mindful that any strategic developments must take into account the need for additional secondary school provision in the Salisbury area as housing developments are progressed; and that all providers, including the Trafalgar School at Downton, Sarum Academy, Wellington Academy and the Grammar Schools, are involved in the strategic planning. The Task Group is also aware that its recommendations may be seen as just another step in a long history of failed attempts to improve the provision of 16-19 education in the Salisbury area. To ensure that the recommendations are seen through to completion and the improvement of 16-19 education in the Salisbury area is brought to fruition, the Task Group therefore recommends that:

- a. a senior officer is identified to take ownership of and report on the implementation of the Task Group's recommendations; and

Executive response:

- (i) Wiltshire Council officers already work in a strong partnership with The Wessex Partnership (TWP) in planning and supporting developments within the Salisbury area, this includes funding a specialist 13-19 officer post within the TWP. In the future it is anticipated that officers of the council will work both with the TWP coordinator, Head teachers and Principals to support the delivery of the actions outlined in this paper.
- (ii) The strategic responsibility for 13-19 education is part of School Improvement within Schools and Learning. I have therefore asked Julie Cathcart as Head of School Improvement to take the strategic lead on these developments and have asked that Tina Pagett Coordinator for 13-19 Education and Skills to oversee the operational implementation of the actions.
- (iii) However, I am also conscious that this activity will be delivered in the context of the changing statutory responsibilities within the phase, reducing resource and increasing demands and expectations and have therefore asked officers to work realistically and keep me updated in relation to progress.

Select Committee recommendation:

The Children's Services Select Committee

- b. requests that the Cabinet Member's response to the Task Group's recommendations is accompanied by an action plan setting out how and when they will be implemented;

Executive response:

- (i) I am aware that officers have started developing the action plan but wish to do so in full collaboration with all 16-19 providers in the Salisbury area and the EFA to ensure that actions are realistic, timely and deliverable. This work is not yet complete as further discussions are required with both the providers and EFA, I anticipate the plan to be completed early in the Autumn term.

Select Committee recommendations:

- c. regularly monitors those actions and reconvenes the Task Group 12 months hence to undertake a rapid scrutiny exercise to consider progress and future plans; and
- d. disseminates the Task Group's report as widely as possible.

No Executive responses required

Conclusion

6. **Members are asked to:**

1. **Note the above Executive's response to the final report of the Further Education in the Salisbury Area Scrutiny Task Group; and**
2. **Agree any further action as appropriate.**

Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Carolyn Godfrey, Corporate Director

Appendices

None

Background documents

Final Report of the Review of Further Education in the Salisbury Area Scrutiny Task Group