

**Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	<b>Executive</b>
Date:	<b>06 October 2015</b>
Subject:	<b>Strategic Priorities for 16 - 18 (25) Education and Training for 2016/17</b>
Decision Reference:	<b>I009700</b>
Key decision?	<b>Yes</b>

**Summary:**

The report sets out the current situation in relation to post 16 education and training and identifies the Council's priorities for the strategic commissioning of education and training provision for 16 - 18 year olds (to 25 for young people with an education, health and care plan) for the academic year 2016/17.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Executive:-

- Notes the current situation in relation to post 16 education and training.
- Approves the priorities set out below as the priorities for the strategic commissioning of education and training provision for 16 - 18 year olds (to 25 for young people with an education, health and care plan) for the academic year 2016/17:-
  1. Increase the number of young people aged 17 participating in education or training and therefore meeting their duty to participate. As required by Raising of the Participation Age.
  2. Reduce the number of young people failing to progress from AS to A2.
  3. Close the gap in attainment at level 2 and level 3 by the age of 19 between young people from deprived backgrounds (those who are or have been eligible for free school meals) and the overall cohort.
  4. Improve progression pathways, including specifically increasing the availability of Apprenticeships at advanced level (level 3) and higher (level 4 and above), to enable young people to access an alternative route to higher study.
  5. Maintain a broad curriculum offer across Lincolnshire so that young people are able to access the courses they require to achieve their career aspirations. This will require schools, colleges and providers to work together in geographical areas.

6. To ensure that all young people have access to independent and impartial careers guidance and information about the labour market and opportunities so that they are able to make realistic, informed decisions about post 14 and post 16 education.
7. Develop programmes and transition pathways which better prepare young people with special education needs and or disabilities (SEND) for adulthood and lead to improved outcomes in terms of employment, independent living, good health and community inclusion.
8. Stimulate demand for courses and programmes which better match the economic growth requirements and skills shortages in Lincolnshire, and therefore reduce youth unemployment among 19 – 25 year olds in particular.

- Approves the Action Plan attached at Appendix B to the Report.

#### **Alternatives Considered:**

A number of alternative priorities and ways of defining the recommended priorities have been considered in the preparation of the Report. The recommended priorities are considered to be the most appropriate to address the Council's statutory responsibilities in the light of the review of the current position set out in the Report.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation:**

Under sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of young people in their area, and to make available to young people aged 19 and below, support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training (section 68, Education and Skills Act 2008).

The Education and Skills Act (ESA) 2008 also places a duty on all young people to participate in education and training. From 2015, they will be required to remain in learning until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Education and Skills Act 2008 places duties on local authorities in relation to 16 and 17 year olds. These relate to Raising the Participation Age:

A Local Authority in England must ensure that its functions (so far as they are capable of being so) are exercised so as to promote the effective participation of education or training of persons belonging to its areas to whom Part 1 of ESA 2008 applies, with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training.

A Local Authority in England must make arrangements to enable it to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of persons belonging to its area to whom Part 1 of the ESA applies but who are failing to fulfil the duty to

participate in education or training.

Failure to set out the duties and changes that are required to ensure suitable provision is available to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in the area will mean:

Lincolnshire County Council will not deliver its statutory duties; Schools, Academies, Colleges and other providers will not have the information they require to enable them to develop provision to respond to the needs of young people and employers.

## 1. Background

- The picture for post 16 education is similar to that in previous years. There continues to be some successes including attainment levels that are in line with those nationally, relatively low levels of NEET, high participation at age 16, and the success of the Supported Internship Programme in securing employment outcomes for young people with SEND.
- The challenges arising from a declining cohort, increasing competition, reducing funding in real terms and a funding mechanism that encourages competition rather than collaboration, are significant and increasing.
- There is a real need for providers including schools, colleges and independent providers to work together to collaborate and consolidate provision in their geographical area to meet the needs and aspirations of students as well as provide a curriculum that meets the needs of the local economy. In addition working together is essential to maintain the financial viability of some schools and colleges that in the main are comparatively small compared to their national counterparts. The recently announced area based reviews will seek to address some of these issues, and all providers including schools and academies will be encouraged to participate fully.

In the academic year 2014-15 there have been some significant changes that impact on post 16 education, and there continues to be legislative and policy changes that will effect provision from 2016 onwards. These include:

- With effect from June 2015 young people are required to participate in education or training until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Reforms to A levels from 2015 onwards, in particular 2 year linear A level programmes.
- Changes to the funding methodology for Apprenticeships which put the funding in the hands of the employer. All Apprenticeships will be funded through the new methodology from September 2017, but as the new frameworks developed by employers come on stream, they will be funded through the new arrangements. There will therefore be dual systems in operation from now onwards.
- The government commitment to creating 3 million apprenticeships during the current parliament will increase competition for learners and requires a significant increase in the number of employers offering opportunities.

- The ending of funding protection in 2016 and the government commitment to protect pre 16 school funding is likely to create further funding pressures for the post 16 sector.
- Increasing devolvement of decision making in relation to Further Education Capital and programmes funded through the European Social Fund to local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), rather than directly from government or via local authorities.
- Introduction of the new Common Inspection Framework which Ofsted will use to inspect all publicly funded education provision.

## **Participation**

- All young people now have a duty to remain in education until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Although the duty to participate is only until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, young people should be encouraged to remain in education past that date, until they have completed their education programme.
- Participation rates for 16 year olds in Lincolnshire continue to be good, with rates at 94.8% June 2015 comparing favourably with national and regional rates and those of our statistical neighbours. However, participation for 17 year olds is nearly 7% lower. Many of these young people will have completed one year of post 16 education, some will have gone into employment without training (5.3%), others become NEET (not in education, employment or training), and there are 4.2% whose education and employment status is unknown. It will continue to be a priority for 2016 to ensure that young people are retained in learning to enable them to meet their duty to participate. This will require young people having the guidance and support to make the appropriate choices in terms of programmes of study, and that the appropriate provision is available and accessible.
- There are a plethora of engagement programmes, most of which are tendered nationally and funded through different government departments with the local authority having little or no influence around the commissioning or delivery of the programmes. Providers are able to achieve their contractual outcomes by progressing young people onto other non mainstream programmes, meaning that young people can move from one engagement programme to another. As a result, they can potentially reach the age of 18 without participating in or completing a mainstream study programme that will provide them with the skills and qualifications required to secure employment or continuing education. In the future the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) will have some influence over the commissioning of some of these discretionary programmes. It is imperative that Lincolnshire County Council is able to influence the types of provision and programmes that are procured for the area through representation of officers and members on the Employment and Skills (ESB) and the GLLEP Boards.
- Vulnerable young people (including care leavers, young people known to the youth offending team, young people who have been entitled to free school meals, teenage parents and those with mental health problems etc.) continue to be over represented in the NEET (not in education employment or training) cohort. Schools, colleges and providers are increasingly under pressure to improve retention and success rates. Poor success rates not only impact on their Ofsted inspection outcomes, but they can lead to

sanctions in relation to minimum levels of performance as well as having an impact on their funding. As a result there is the potential for providers to be risk averse, and as some of the young people in these groups can be seen as having a high risk of non-completion, they can face difficulties in securing appropriate provision.

**Current and future actions:**

- The duty to participate lies with the young person and the local authority does not have the power to impose sanctions on young people (or their parents) that refuse to participate (although the Secretary of State has reserved the right to introduce these, there is no suggestion that this is likely in the foreseeable future). Participation of young people of RPA age is tracked on an ongoing basis, and those who are not participating are offered support and encouragement to participate by the local authority funded Careers Service.
- The 14 – 19 Commissioner is a member of the Employment and Skills Board (ESB) and there is County Councillor representation on both the ESB and the GLLEP. There is therefore the opportunity to influence commissioning of engagement programmes funded through the European Social Fund that more effectively progress young people into appropriate study programmes.
- Looked after Children receive careers guidance from the Council funded Careers Service whilst in school, and priority is given to care leavers accessing work experience opportunities within the Council. The development of the Supported Internship programme has increased opportunities and outcomes for young adults with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), and the Council's own Education Funding Agency programme, the Young Peoples Learning Provision based at Grantham, supports some of the most disadvantaged young people who are not able to access provision elsewhere.
- The multi agency Participation Vulnerable Learners Group will continue to explore ways to remove barriers to and increase the participation of vulnerable young people in education.

**Apprenticeships and Traineeships**

- The National Apprenticeship Service no longer supplies Apprenticeship performance data to local authorities to enable comparisons with regional and national performance. Agreement has to be sought with Local Enterprise Partnerships to share the data which is provided at LEP level so includes data for Greater Lincolnshire. The data we have comes from our tracking participation and shows that there has been some growth in the proportion of young people undertaking Apprenticeships in Lincolnshire (increase of 0.4% from the same time last year) with year on year growth from 3.1% in 2012 to 6.7% in 2014.
- 10 Lincolnshire based providers deliver 50% of Apprenticeships in Lincolnshire, with the remainder delivered by 179 providers based outside of the county, limiting the scope to influence delivery either directly or via the GLLEP.
- Opportunities for progression within the Apprenticeship route continue to give cause for concern. Of the 1,985 Apprentices aged 16 – 18 currently on

the programme, over twice as many are undertaking level 2 (Intermediate) as level 3 (Advanced) with only 12 young people undertaking level 4. There are virtually no 19 – 24 year olds undertaking level 4 Apprenticeships

- Business Administration (12%) Hairdressing (6%) and Customer Service (4.5%) make up over 20% of the total occupations. There are only currently 1.6% undertaking retail Apprenticeships, and taken together Apprentices in the construction industry comprise 16%. The majority of these are studying electrical installation and plumbing with only 41 Apprentices undertaking trowel trades and 59 wood occupations.
- The Local Government Association report '*Skills to Build*' published in August 2015 suggests that the reduction in the number of young people undertaking Apprenticeships in the construction trades (58% reduction since 2012) will have a serious impact on the government's house building and infrastructure plans and on growth more generally.
- The government's Apprenticeship reform programme, alongside the target to create 3 million Apprenticeships within the lifetime of the current parliament, creates some challenges as well as opportunities. The reforms put employers in the driving seat in relation to development of the frameworks (qualifications, competencies and summative assessment arrangements) and the funding.
- The development of employer led trailblazer apprenticeship frameworks, particularly at higher and degree level provides some opportunities to create work based progression pathways to graduate level that are a real alternative to the academic route. In addition they will potentially provide opportunities to develop solutions to developing skills shortages. More young people are likely to see the benefits of undertaking an Apprenticeship at the age of 16 if they can see a pathway right through to higher and degree level.
- There is a potential risk that changes to the way Apprenticeships are funded will impact on the financial viability of some Apprenticeship providers and on the number of Apprenticeships offered. Lincolnshire has a large proportion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), some of which are already reluctant to take Apprentices due to the perceived additional bureaucracy. The Government has sought to simplify the process as much as possible. However, the relationship between provider and employer will change, with the provider securing public funding in direct proportion to the fee negotiated with the employer. Competition, particularly in relation to the popular frameworks, could result in reducing fees with an inevitable impact on quality. In order to make robust decisions in relation to the commissioning of Apprenticeship providers, including negotiating the fees charged, the employer needs to be well informed.
- The government target is that all Apprenticeships and funding will be under the new arrangements from September 2017. However, as new frameworks become ready for use prior to that date, they will be subject to the new employer led funding arrangements. There will then, for a period, be two different funding mechanisms in place which will potentially lead to some confusion for employers.

***Current and Future Actions:***

- A network of Apprenticeship Ambassadors has been established by the Skills Funding Agency, comprising current and recent Apprentices. They have received specific training, and are willing (with the permission and support of their employer), to give presentations to employers and prospective Apprentices, about their own experiences as an Apprentice. Eight individuals have signed up to do this in Lincolnshire, four of whom are Apprentices from Lincolnshire County Council.
- Work will continue to increase the supply and demand for Apprenticeship places through working with schools, the careers service and in partnership with the Employment and Skills Board and the Work Based Learning Alliance.
- A substantial growth in the number of Apprenticeships will be required if the Government ambition to achieve 3 million Apprenticeships within the lifetime of the current parliament is to be achieved. Activity to increase the take up of Apprenticeships of all ages is included in the GLLEP commissioning plans.
- Officers will seek to influence and encourage the development and delivery of the new frameworks in the local area through dialogue with individual institutions including universities, provider and college networks and other structures such as the ESB and GLLEP.
- Opportunities for the Council and its strategic partners to get involved in the development and delivery of the new frameworks is being explored with a view to identifying how they can be used to assist in meeting developing skills shortages in social care, health and teaching.

### **School Sixth Forms**

- Provisional data indicates that A-level passes for Lincolnshire schools were at 99% which is 0.9% above the national average. There has also been improvement in the numbers of the highest grades awarded with 8.2% A\* grades awarded, in line with national performance. When the results of students undertaking programmes that are equivalent to A levels are included, there is also an improvement of 0.9% in pass grades awarded.
- In terms of quality of provision, 12 schools with sixth forms are overall outstanding, with 9 of their sixth forms also being judged as outstanding and 3 as good. Of the 17 schools judged to be good overall, three have sixth forms that require improvement and 1 is outstanding. 2 of the schools that require improvement have sixth forms that are good with the remainder also requiring improvement, and the sixth form in the school that is in an inadequate category is judged as requiring improvement. 2014 – 15 was the first year that Ofsted awarded separate grades to sixth form provision.
- Student numbers in school sixth forms have, overall, increased slightly. However, the increase is not consistent across schools with 17 schools seeing a reduction, some of which are substantial, and in 7 schools there has been a continuing decline in numbers over the last 3 years. As a result there continues to be concerns in relation to some schools, particularly those with smaller sixth forms. School sixth forms that attempt to offer a full academic post 16 curriculum with less than 250 students are unlikely to be financially viable and there are concerns therefore about the impact on pre 16 education if the sixth form is being subsidised through 11 – 16 funding.

- The percentage of young people failing to progress from year 12 to year 13 remains at an unacceptably high level of 18%. It was anticipated that the reforms to A-levels would potentially reduce the drop out rates as students were expected to have to choose whether to undertake a stand-alone AS or go directly onto a 2 year A level programme. However, the curricula for AS and A levels have now been developed so that the first year of an A level and the AS level are the same, meaning there is still the potential for students to undertake AS levels then leave school rather than progress to A2. As these students then have to enrol on a 2 year programme to achieve level 3 qualification, this not only delays student achievement by a year, but if the costs of the additional years those students then require to complete a full level 3 programme are taken into account, it represents a cost to the public purse equivalent to 18 – 20% (almost £7million) of the school sixth form budget every year.

***Current and future actions:***

- Work will continue to encourage and facilitate collaborative activities to mitigate the impact of future reductions in funding on the curriculum offer, including the identification and sharing of best practice from elsewhere in England.
- A paper will be presented to the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board in December giving details of the issues relating to over sufficiency of academic school sixth form provision, concerns about financial viability and the need for better collaboration to preserve the curriculum.
- A data dashboard has been developed that looks specifically at school sixth form performance. This has been provided for all schools initially and in future will be included in the data packs for the schools that use this service.

**General Further Education Colleges (GFE)**

- At the time of writing, of the 4 main GFE colleges in Lincolnshire, one is judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding, 2 are Good and 1 Requires Improvement.
- The demographic decline in the number of 16 – 18 year olds is starting to have a significant impact on GFE colleges with the 4 Lincolnshire based colleges between them having a reduction in learner number allocations of 600 for September 2015. This represents a reduction in funding of almost £3million.
- The reduction in the number of 16 – 18 year old students together with the significant reductions in colleges' adult skills budget allocations (of up to 24%) has created difficulties for the GFE sector as a whole, with the FE Commissioner intervening in around 50 colleges nationally as a result of concerns relating to colleges' financial viability. Whilst we have no evidence that any of our colleges are facing similar specific difficulties, they are all comparatively small and therefore potentially vulnerable. The area based reviews referred to elsewhere in this paper will look at potential collaboration opportunities in order to ensure a sector that is financially robust. However, the rural nature of Lincolnshire means the colleges are geographically spread and there are therefore limited options for reducing costs by, for example, reducing the number of campuses.

- The government provided some transitional protection funding to cushion the financial impact of the reduction in funding for students in year 14, many of whom will have left school at the end of year 12 having completed AS levels before commencing a new 2 year level 3 programme. This transitional protection has ceased in the current academic year.
- Colleges are the main providers of vocational training, sub level 2 programmes, and Apprenticeships.
- To date none of the Lincolnshire based colleges have sought approval to recruit 14 – 16 year olds (other than Lincoln College through the involvement with the University Technical College).
- The vast majority of young people with SEND, including those with high levels of need) continue to attend local FE colleges where they access a range of courses aimed at increasing employability and/or independent living skills.
- Some young adults with SEND are remaining in post-16 education for several years. Whilst this may be appropriate for some, there is evidence that some young people are remaining in education due to a lack of effective arrangements to enable them to make an effective transition into adult life.
- Although none of the Lincolnshire Colleges have a campus in East Lindsey, Grimsby Institute for Further and Higher Education (GIFHE) provide a substantial vocational offer via their provision badged as 'Lincolnshire Regional College'.
- Although some colleges are starting to offer some programmes starting at other times of the year, (mainly January) than September, the vast majority of courses commence at the beginning of the academic year. This means that young people who have not secured a place by September, or who drop out of education for whatever reason, have often to wait until the following September to secure a college place. Increasingly this applies to Apprenticeships where the off the job training is a formal college course.

***Current and future actions:***

- Officers meet termly with the Lincolnshire Federation of Colleges, which includes colleges and sixth form colleges from North and North East Lincolnshire, to discuss requirements and priorities in Lincolnshire.
- Due to their size colleges are able to offer a much wider choice of curriculum, including offering alternatives for students who decide they are unable to continue with their programme part way through the year.
- Additional flexibility in programme start dates will be encouraged. The need to recruit students in order to prevent any further reductions in lagged learner number allocations may incentivise increasing flexibility in this respect.
- Work will continue, supported by the 'Better Care' funding, to develop programmes for young adults with SEND that better prepare them for work and/or independent living and to support the transition into adult life.

**Further Education in Higher Education.**

- From September 2012, Bishop Burton College has been operating from the Riseholme campus of Lincoln University to provide specialist programmes in agriculture and horticulture. Their new campus based on land adjacent to the Lincolnshire Showground will open this September and there will be a phased transfer to the new site. Ties with Lincoln University will end completely by 2020.
- Bishop Burton College report a significant increase in students wishing to undertake courses in agriculture and related occupations. Agriculture has been identified as a priority sector for growth in Lincolnshire by the GLLEP.

### **University Technical College (UTC)**

- The UTC opened in September 2014 and is a partnership between Lincoln College, Lincoln University and Siemens. The College specialises in engineering and provides education to years 10 to 13 (14 – 18 year olds) comprising a core academic curriculum including English and maths alongside highly specialist subjects in engineering and maths delivered in a business like environment. There are currently 140 students on roll (80 year 11 and 60 year 13) and potentially over 200 students starting this September. Pending confirmation of exam results 75 will start in year 10 and a further 120 in year 12. The provision has been delivered in temporary accommodation for the first year, and will move to the newly refurbished premises at Greestone House this September.
- Some excellent partnerships have been established with employers and all students have completed work experience placements, some of which have led to summer holiday placements, job offers and Apprenticeship interviews.
- Students have had successes in national competitions, in particular three year 10 students won the NASA Computer Science programming award (a national award) and their winning Raspberry Pi computer will be going up into space with astronaut Tim Peake in November.
- Although none of the students have yet undertaken GCSEs or A levels, the AS level results were excellent with many students exceeding their anticipated grades, some by a long way. There have been similar successes with technical qualifications.

### **Commercial and Charitable Providers (CCP)**

- There are a small group of commercial and charitable providers which nonetheless make a valuable contribution to the post 16 offer in Lincolnshire. They tend to specialise in the delivery of foundation and entry level programmes to those young people who are not ready to undertake education and training at level 2, and who in many cases feel unable to cope with a large college environment. They are able to enrol students all year around and for this reason are able to assist with providing opportunities for young people who find themselves not in education or training. Most also deliver traineeships and Apprenticeships and it is possible that the planned changes to Apprenticeship funding may have an impact on their future viability. It is hoped that the specialist nature of the provision and the narrower offer means that if there are budgetary challenges, these will not be to the same extent as those faced by our smaller sixth forms.

- In terms of quality of provision, 5 are judged by Ofsted to be Good with the remaining 1 Requiring Improvement.
- The main independent specialist provider for young people with SEND based in Lincolnshire has adapted its learning offer to provide day placements rather than residential provision in line with the Lincolnshire Strategy for Post 16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities. As such it provides opportunities in East Lindsey for those young people with SEND who prefer or who are unable to travel further afield. It is judged by Ofsted to be good.

***Current and future actions:***

- Local authority staff will liaise with the Education Funding Agency to identify and mitigate any emerging issues and concerns in terms of quality and viability.
- Work will continue in partnership with the Work Based Learning Alliance to ensure these providers continue to meet the needs of young people who are the most disadvantaged.

**Students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)**

- In 2014/15 appropriate provision was secured for all high needs learners within budget.
- It is not anticipated that this budget, which is delegated from the Education Funding Agency, will increase in future years, but we do expect that it will come under increasing pressure as young people with increasingly complex needs come through the system, and as expectations are increased as the new Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) become embedded.
- Under the new legislation, young people with an EHCP can remain in education to the age of 25. This is not, however, an entitlement nor is there an expectation that young people with an EHCP will remain in education until the age of 25. When deciding that an EHCP is no longer required 'the local authority must have regard to whether the educational or training outcomes in the plan have been achieved' (*Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years*). At the end of the summer term 2015 a significant number of applications were made to continue education beyond the previously agreed date. A substantial proportion of these were requests to continue education at the same level, or where it was judged that continuing education was unlikely to improve preparation for adulthood outcomes in terms of employment or increased independence. There is a need to improve colleges' and other providers' focus on promoting independence outcomes so that these young people are better prepared for adulthood, and on securing better more timely transitions into their planned destinations.
- The Supported Internship programme, particularly that delivered by the Council's own Promoting Employment Team (PET) has been particularly successful in terms of securing employment outcomes (at the time of writing 19 of 36 internees have achieved paid employment and we expect this number to rise before the end of the summer). The internal team has been providing support to colleges to develop their own programmes. Where colleges require continuing support from 2015, the Council will recoup the costs of providing this service.

### ***Current and future actions:***

- Better Care funding has been allocated to support the development of provision that will better prepare young people for adulthood, in particular those with the most complex needs, and a Preparing for Adulthood strategy and action plan has been developed with stakeholders. The project brings a range of partners and stakeholders together including education, health, social care and housing from the public, private and voluntary sector. The intended outcome is to improve the transition of young adults with the most profound and complex needs, including through development of education programmes that increase independence and therefore reduce reliance on adult social care throughout their lifetime.
- A post 16 funding framework for high cost placements has been developed, in consultation with providers, and has been piloted for students commencing college and independent provider programmes from September 2015. The framework provides a coherent structure for making funding decisions as well as a consistent approach across the county. Previously the colleges and providers themselves decided what they would charge. A full evaluation of the process will be undertaken in the autumn term to enable the framework and process to be refined for full implementation for 2016/17.
- There is a continuing need for schools, colleges and other providers to further develop their study programmes to focus better on preparation for adulthood. As Education, Health and Care Plans become embedded in the system, the focus on outcomes will enable better judgements to be made with regard to the effectiveness of study programmes for these students. As part of their funding agreements, colleges and providers will be expected to proactively work with other agencies to support transition of young people into appropriate outcomes.
- Work will continue to build on the success of the supported internship programme. This includes providing opportunities within the Council and its strategic partners as well as promoting the benefits of employing young adults with SEND to employers through structures such as the ESB and GLLEP and via the Council's supply chain.

### ***Careers Information Advice and Guidance***

- The duty to provide impartial independent careers guidance transferred to schools in September 2012 and in 2013 was extended to include pupils in schools in year 8 and in schools and colleges up to year 13.
- The local authority does not have any role in monitoring the delivery of careers guidance in schools. Support has been provided to schools to advise and encourage them to develop this, but the quantity and quality of the support does vary between schools. An Ofsted thematic review found that nationally only 1 in 5 schools visited had ensured that all students received sufficient information to consider a wide breadth of career possibilities.
- The current DfE guidance places a reduced emphasis on the provision of professional careers advice and an increased focus on schools developing links with employers. There are a number of nationally commissioned initiatives to support schools to deliver careers guidance and develop links with employers. These include: National Careers Service, CAPITA (DfE run

Careers and Enterprise Company), and Job Centre Plus. As a result the system is fragmented and uncoordinated and potentially confusing for schools.

- There continues to be potential and increasing tension in schools with sixth forms between the requirement to provide independent impartial guidance pre 16 and the need to retain learner numbers in the sixth form to maintain funding levels. This is compounded by the increase in competition and the declining size of the 16 – 18 cohort mentioned elsewhere in this report. The high numbers of students failing to progress from AS to A2 suggests that AS is perhaps not the most appropriate programme for significant numbers of young people who have been accepted onto the courses. GFE colleges continue to report difficulties in gaining access to some schools to explain their offer.

#### ***Current and future actions:***

- The Local Authority Careers Service will continue to work with young people aged 16 – 18 who are not in education, employment or training to fulfil the statutory duty to make available to young people support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training. It also provides a traded service to schools, and early indications are that schools will, from September 2015, continue to purchase similar levels to those in 2014/15.
- There will be a requirement to work with schools and employers to encourage and facilitate links and to ensure that where the links are made they are effective in both improving students' awareness of the opportunities available and the world of work. This will require the engagement of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership via the Employment and Skills Board.
- The Council resource (Careers Education Information and Guidance team) that hitherto has provided support to schools to develop and improve their career education and guidance offer will no longer be available from September 2015. The quality and appropriateness of schools' careers guidance offer and their student destinations will be included in the work to support the development of sector led school improvement and school to school support.

#### **Attainment and Closing the Gap**

- Attainment levels for 19 year olds who have not been eligible for free school meals (FSM) in Lincolnshire are in line with or above national averages. 86% of young people achieve full level 2 qualifications by the age of 19, in line with the national figure, and the figure for full level 2 with English and maths is 3% higher than that nationally at 73%. 60% of young people who are not eligible for FSM achieved level 3 at age 19, again in line with the national figure.
- The gap in attainment between young people who are eligible for FSM and those who are not continues to be worryingly large although there is some slight movement in the right direction. Any gap is of concern given the impact of failure to achieve on future employment prospects and future earning power, but the gap in attainment at level 3, although reduced by 1%, is 7% higher than that nationally at 32%. The picture is similar for attainment

of level 2 including English and maths where it is 32% compared to 27% nationally, and for level 2 without English and maths is 23% compared to 17%.

- The proportion of young people who have not achieved GCSE grade C in English and maths at age 16, who then go on to achieve these by age 19 is 17.4% compared to 16.9% nationally.

**Current and future actions:**

- Data sharing agreements with FE colleges and other post 16 providers have been revised to enable the local authority to share information regarding young people who have been eligible for free school meals to enable colleges to target additional support to those young people (including targeting additional learning support more effectively and the allocation of bursary funding).
- The requirement that all young people who have not yet achieved GCSE grade A\* - C in both English and maths continue to study these subjects as a condition of funding came into force in September this year. This should have an impact in the longer term. Data to show whether the requirement to continue studying these subjects from 2014 has had an impact is not yet available.
- The data dashboard developed for school sixth forms includes details regarding their performance in closing the gap by age 19, including comparisons with the national data. A similar data dashboard is being developed for FE colleges.
- There has been some progress in closing the attainment gap in early years, but the gap gets progressively larger through primary, secondary and post-16 education. The work that is being undertaken to address this within pre 16 education will therefore be vital to reduce the post-16 gap.
- The lack of Apprenticeship opportunities at level 3, the high proportion of young people leaving school at the end of year 12 and the higher number of young people not in education, employment or training at the age of 17 are all contributory factors to the attainment of level 3 at age 19, and the local authority will continue to support and encourage the development of progression opportunities.
- The reforms to A-levels is not now expected to have the impact anticipated on reducing the number of young people leaving school after completing AS levels, as most schools are now planning to teach AS level alongside the A2 curriculum, with students taking AS exams at the end of year 12.

**Curriculum**

- Around half of young people continue to receive their post 16 education in schools with around 40% attending college. The remaining 10% undertake Apprenticeships or attend the small independent providers.
- The strategic analysis for this year includes an analysis of provision by sector tier in comparison with the skills priorities identified in the GLLEP growth plan for Lincolnshire. The analysis shows little change to the vocational offer with delivery of engineering and construction at similar levels to last year, but still well below the numbers required to meet the needs of the local economy. There has been a slight increase in the delivery

of information technology and in leisure and tourism, again not at sufficient levels to meet future potential demand.

- There has also been a shift from delivery of level 3 to level 2 provision. This is more marked in GFE colleges where there has been a reduction in level 3 of 5%. There has been a drop too in comprehensive schools of 1% from 89% (100% of activity in Grammar school sixth forms is at level 3). Given the GLLEP predictions of the need for higher level skills, this is a concern, as is the potential impact on targets for attainment of level 3 at age 19.
- The majority of vocational training takes place in our GFE colleges who tailor their provision for 16 – 19 year olds to meet student demand rather than sector priorities. The recently published Local Government Association report '*Skills to Build*' highlights the developing issue in relation to construction skills and the need to train many more young people to fill the developing skills shortages.
- The GLLEP strategic plan lists a number of priorities for growth and there continues to be a mis-match between these and the courses that young people take in post 16 education. Whilst there is devolvement of some strategic responsibility for the allocation of the adult skills budget to LEPs, there are no similar plans in relation to the funding for post 16 education. Discussions between the LEP and the ESB and colleges as a result focus on arrangements for adults (post 19).

#### **Current and future actions:**

- Work continues with colleagues in the Environment and Economy directorate and with the ESB and GLLEP to encourage the post 16 sector to better respond to skills requirements for economic growth. The continuing and increasing competition to recruit students and a funding mechanism that encourages competition rather than collaboration to meet the skills needs of the local economy continues to be frustrating these efforts. Opportunities to lobby for greater control and influence in relation to post 16 education will continue to be sought.

#### **Provision**

- The demographic decline in the size of the 16 – 18 cohort which will not plateau until 2020, and the increasing competition for students continues to have a negative impact on the curriculum offer and on outcomes for students as well as potentially on the future economic growth in Lincolnshire. If the Government target in relation to Apprenticeships is to be achieved, this will create further competition for students.
- The Government has sought to devolve some responsibility for the adult skills budget to the local enterprise partnerships. This does not however include Education Funding Agency funding for education and training, which is funded on a strictly applied formula basis. This basically means that schools, colleges and other providers are funded for the number of students they enrolled the previous year (referred to as 'lagged learner' funding). Rather than encourage the collaboration that is necessary to provide a coherent curriculum offer in a local area that meets the needs of students and the local and wider economy, the funding system means that providers increasingly compete to recruit from a declining pool. National policy stipulates that colleges, providers and schools are autonomous

organisations which are free to set their own curriculum, and although they are expected to take into account local priorities (as defined by the local authority priorities for education and training) neither local authorities nor LEPs have any powers or levers to influence the offer.

- The impact of increased competition and declining cohort on schools sixth forms has been the subject for papers and discussions on several previous occasions. The situation is developing however, where the concerns extend to GFE colleges. The Government has appointed a number of FE Commissioners to intervene in GFE and sixth form colleges that are experiencing financial difficulties. Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that any of the Lincolnshire based colleges are in this category, they are small and therefore potentially vulnerable. The four colleges have between them a reduction in student numbers of 600 (i.e. around £3million funding,) which in addition to the 24% reduction in their adult skills funding allocations will have had a significant impact on their income. We are aware that all have recently made changes to their staffing structures, but have yet to see the detail of any impact on the curriculum offer. There is also a concern that there will be an impact on the pastoral support provided e.g. counselling which given that colleges have traditionally recruited higher proportions of vulnerable learners is of concern.
- Despite efforts to encourage schools to collaborate, there has been little change other than an increase rather than reduction in school sixth form provision. Some schools are establishing sixth forms by partnering with another school (either within their Academy trust or independently) with an established sixth form, which acts as the admissions authority and provides the funding. Barnes Wallace Academy's plans to do this from September were put on hold due to their inability to attract sufficient student numbers. King Edward School at Spilsby already have this arrangement in place through their academy trust and we understand other schools without sixth forms are considering this option. Haven High Academy in Boston made an application to establish a sixth form in their own right from September 2015. On that occasion their application was turned down by the EFA and they have made arrangements to fund through another Lincolnshire school.
- A selective post 16 free school is opening in September in Oakham. This school will provide a purely academic A level curriculum aimed at students aspiring to Russell Group Universities. A consultation is also currently taking place regarding the transfer of Rutland County College provision (currently based in Oakham) to Casterton Business College site from September. Casterton is less than 2 miles from Stamford and this potential change could therefore lead to increased competition in the area.
- The government has announced its intention to carry out area based reviews of post 16 education between September 2015 and April 2017. These reviews will be undertaken by Departments for Education (DfE) and Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and will include involvement of local authorities and LEPs. The reviews however, will focus on FE colleges (and sixth form colleges of which there are none in Lincolnshire) and whilst taking into account the availability and quality of all post-16 academic and work based provision in each area in the analysis stage, will only include provision other than FE colleges where they (providers and schools) agree. Further detail has yet to be announced but the review will comprise of an

options analysis and make recommendations which may include restructure or formal collaboration. There will be no compulsion to implement the recommendations and 'Governing bodies will be responsible for deciding whether to accept recommendations relating to their institutions. If recommendations are accepted, individual institutions will be responsible for implementing changes following a period of consultation.' There is no indication as yet as to the timescale or scope in relation to Lincolnshire.

***Current and future actions:***

- Representation has been made to DfE and BIS regarding the need to include all provision in an area in the planned reviews, as well as the need to take into account the specific issues arising from a rural area in relation to travel to learn distances and transport infrastructure.
- The Local Authority will work with the DfE and BIS to ensure the area based review outcomes meet the needs of students and employers in Lincolnshire.
- Work will continue to encourage and facilitate collaboration where institutions wish to explore this further.
- The County Council will continue to make it clear in communications and interactions with schools, academies, colleges and other providers that it will not accept that young people will not have access to a full curriculum and that it has an expectation that schools, academies and other providers will co-operate to ensure that students have access to the courses they wish to undertake to enable them to achieve their education and employment aspirations.

***Student views***

- An online survey has been carried out to ascertain the views of students in year 12 about their transition into post-16 education and the factors that influenced the decisions they made. A reasonable response rate was achieved with 1344 students completing the survey, from 18 institutions including colleges, grammar and comprehensive school sixth forms, the UTC, a special school and an independent training provider.
- 74% of the students surveyed stated they were happy with their course with 86% stating they felt their course was preparing them for the next step in their learning or career.
- A summary of the findings is attached at Appendix A.

***Equality Act 2010***

The Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 needs to be taken into account by the Executive when coming to a decision.

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: [Equality Act 2010 section 149\(1\)](#). The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: section 149(7)

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low
- The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities
- Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding
- Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others
- The relevant protected characteristics are:
  - ❖ Age
  - ❖ Disability
  - ❖ Gender reassignment
  - ❖ Pregnancy and maternity
  - ❖ Race
  - ❖ Religion or belief
  - ❖ Sex
  - ❖ Sexual orientation
- A reference to conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act includes a reference to:
  - ❖ A breach of an equality clause or rule
  - ❖ A breach of a non-discrimination rule

It is important that the Executive is aware of the special duties the Council owes to persons who have a protected characteristic as the duty cannot be delegated and

must be discharged by the Executive Councillor. The duty applies to all decisions taken by public bodies including policy decisions and decisions on individual cases and includes this decision.

To discharge the statutory duty the Executive must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

Individuals who have protected characteristics should experience an accessible service regardless. Accessibility means that first and foremost they have easy access to the service and that the service offered has equal regard in terms of supporting their individual needs and aspirations. The collaborative partners and service providers will be required to have policies and procedures in place and have staff sufficiently trained in their responsibilities in regard to the Equality Act. An integral part of the monitoring of the arrangements will be to look at where individuals have experienced negative outcomes, looks at trends and whether there is any association with protected characteristics. As a result policies and procedures must be changed and regularly reviewed to minimise any negative impact.

### ***Child Poverty Strategy***

The Council is under a duty in the exercise of its functions to have regard to its Child Poverty Strategy. Child poverty is one of the key risk factors that can negatively influence a child's life chances. Children that live in poverty are at greater risk of social exclusion which, in turn, can lead to poor outcomes for the individual and for society as a whole.

In Lincolnshire we consider that poverty is not only a matter of having limited financial resources but that it is also about the ability of families to access the means of lifting themselves out of poverty and of having the aspiration to do so. The following four key strategic themes form the basis of Lincolnshire's Child Poverty strategy: Economic Poverty, Poverty of Access, Poverty of Aspiration and Best Use of Resources.

The Strategy has been taken into account in this instance and the following comments are made:

#### Economic Poverty

Improved performance of education providers will enhance pupil's educational performance and attainment, providing improved chances of access to further education and well paid employment.

#### Poverty of Access

Lack of qualifications and skills are a key barrier in accessing employment opportunities and the ability to earn at least a living wage. Improving schools and pupils performance and options available will enhance the ability to access employment opportunities.

### Poverty of Aspiration

A key part of the strategic priorities for 16-18 year olds for education and training is to close the gap of attainment between those vulnerable groups and their peers. The priorities reflect the importance of providers supporting vulnerable learners to achieve their aspirations and fulfil their potential.

### Best use of Resources

Best use of Resources aims to ensure that all key stakeholders contribute to improving the life chances of children and young people in a coordinated way. The priorities within this paper support that through influencing education providers

### ***Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)***

The Lincolnshire JSNA identifies a number of needs that directly relate to young people, with a specific focus on Educational Attainment. This service directly supports the improvement in:

- Outcomes for pupils at the end of Foundation and Key Stage 4
- Outcomes for pupils eligible for Free School Meals (economic deprivation), and those with Special Educational Needs
- Reducing the gap in achievement between “key vulnerable groups” and their peers

### ***Health & Well Being Strategy***

The Lincolnshire Health & Well Being Strategy includes five main themes. This service specifically supports:

Promoting healthier lifestyles through enhancing training and education opportunities for 16-18 year olds.

Tackling the social determinants of health through supporting the reduction of the percentage of people aged 16-18 who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

## **2. Conclusion**

- The picture for post 16 education is similar to that in previous years. There continues to be some successes including attainment levels that are in line with those nationally, relatively low levels of NEET, high participation at age 16, and the success of the Supported Internship Programme in securing employment outcomes for young people with SEND.
- The challenges arising from a declining cohort, increasing competition, reducing funding in real terms and a funding mechanism that encourages competition rather than collaboration, are significant and increasing.
- There is a real need for providers including schools, colleges and independent providers to work together to collaborate and consolidate provision in their geographical area to meet the needs and aspirations of

students as well as provide a curriculum that meets the needs of the local economy. In addition working together is essential to maintain the financial viability of some schools and colleges that in the main are comparatively small compared to their national counterparts. The recently announced area based reviews will seek to address some of these issues, and all providers including schools and academies will be encouraged to participate fully.

### **3. Legal Comments:**

The Report seeks approval for the priorities for the strategic commissioning of education and training provision for 16 - 18 year olds (to 25 for young people with an education, health and care plan) for the academic year 2016/17. The priorities are in turn designed to assist the Council in fulfilling a number of statutory obligations in relation to post-16 provision as set out in the Report.

The recommendation is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive.

### **4. Resource Comments:**

There are no immediate financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The report highlights a number of challenges, and the actions that have been proposed to address those will need to be funded from the base budgets that are currently available.

### **5. Consultation**

#### **a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?**

Yes

#### **b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?**

Yes

#### **c) Scrutiny Comments**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will consider this report at its meeting on 11 September 2015. Comments from this meeting will be presented to the Executive on 6 October 2015.

#### **d) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

Not applicable

### **6. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire County Council Year 12 Participation Survey - summary of findings
Appendix B	Strategic Priorities for 16 - 18 (25) Education and Training 2016-17 Action Plan

## **7. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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